



ORGANIZING CLIMATE-FRIENDLY EVENTS

— GUIDELINES —

2	WELCOME TO "ORGANIZING CLIMATE-FRIENDLY EVENTS"!	4	VOCABULARY	8	EARTH, OUR HOME
20	PLANNING THE EVENT	28	LOCATION, VENUE, AND ACCOMMODATIONS	36	ENERGY AND WATER
48	TRANSPORT	60	FOOD	70	MATERIALS, SUPPLIES, AND SERVICES
78	WASTE	88	ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT	96	FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AFTER THE EVENT
100	COMMUNICATION	104	SELF-EVALUATION FORM	106	RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO “ORGANIZING CLIMATE- FRIENDLY EVENTS”!

Welcome! This publication is a practical guide for young organisers of events to bring sustainable low-carbon practices into their work. The main structure of the materials follows the process of organizing an event. However, most of the information and tips can also be applied to personal life and to the everyday work of organizations.

Here you will find some factual background information along with a series of checklists, with tips, that you can use as a tool in planning and implementing your events. Further references and links are provided to supplement information presented in this Guide.

Our invitation to you is to look through this guide when you are thinking about or already preparing for an event and consider: Which of the suggested practices could I implement easily? Which ones could I ask others to employ? What message would I send to my team and to the participants of the event by making my choices and by encouraging them to do their part?

Some of the tips are quick and easy to implement, whereas others require more thought and preparation. Some might depend upon extra investment. Some might not be relevant or realistic in your situation. You know best. We, the authors, hope that this guide will help you to find your way through the issues and to make the best choices for your event.

We wanted to offer you the best. Before sharing this guide with you, we tested it with a group of young people from Latvia, Denmark, and Belarus. They met each other in summer 2015, then studied, explored, and improved the guide. They called themselves Team Decarbonize, and their suggestions, comments, and experience are included here.

You ARE going to change the world by rethinking our impact on the environment and by organizing more sustainable events. It starts with you, then passes to your team members, and then to the participants, the cousin of a participant, her colleague who happens to be a teacher, a class of students... We will be creating a society that is aware of its impact on the climate, one that is considerate about its common and individual choices. We need a society that helps the Earth and humanity to thrive, to develop, and not to decay. Thanks for being part of the change!

CARBON FOOTPRINT

CARBON OFFSETS

ECO-LABEL

WATER

FOSSIL FUELS

FOOTPRINT

FAIR

CO₂

RECYCLING

TRADE

CARBON

ABLE
ENT

VOCABULARY

TRADE

GHG

ECO-LABEL

CO₂

RECYCLING

ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

FOSSIL FUELS

CO₂

CARBON OFFSETS

4

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

CARBON EMISSIONS —

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is a colourless, odourless, and non-poisonous gas formed by combustion of carbon and in the respiration of living organisms. It is considered a greenhouse gas (GHG). "Emissions" means the release of GHGs and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.

CARBON FOOTPRINT —

Generally defined as the total volume of GHGs produced to support human activities either directly or indirectly. It is usually stated in equivalent tonnes of CO₂. Usage of the term varies; some define it to include only direct CO₂ emissions, while others include all full-life-cycle GHG emissions. Carbon footprints apply to events and organisations as well as to humans.

CARBON MITIGATION (REDUCTION) —

Various incentives or regulations to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere and, in general, to use less energy.

CARBON OFFSETS —

A person or entity can purchase carbon-offset 'credits' from emission-reduction projects that have prevented or removed an equivalent amount of GHG emissions from the atmosphere elsewhere.

CLIMATE CHANGE —

Any substantial change in the climate of the planet that lasts for an extended period of time.

ECO-LABEL —

A symbol indicating that a product, over its whole lifecycle from raw material to waste management, has a low negative impact on the environment. For example, a product might have less packaging, might emit less carbon into the atmosphere, or might be made with fewer chemicals during the production process and in the final product. Eco-label, subject to certain criteria, is awarded by an independent certifying organisation, which oversees the fulfilment of these criteria on regular basis.

5

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY —

Preserving the health and diversity of our environment now and in the future.

FAIR TRADE —

A social movement and associated labelling aiming to prevent exploitation of workforce and local people in the developing countries, and to promote environmentally friendly production of food. The most popular fair-trade products are chocolate, tea, coffee, sugar, cocoa, tropical fruit, juices, and rice.

FOSSIL FUELS —

Hydrocarbons such as coal, lignite, peat, oil, and natural gas, derived from the remains of ancient plant and animal life. Fossil fuels are not renewable and they inevitably will be depleted in the foreseeable future. Burning fossil fuels is the main source of CO₂ emissions. Collectively, their extraction releases many other pollutants, including also the emissions of the very potent GHG methane.

GREENHOUSE GASES (GHGS) —

GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (NO₂), methane (CH₄), ozone (O₃), water (H₂) vapor, and chloro-fluorocarbons, whether occurring naturally or resulting from human activities of production and consumption, that contribute to the global warming.

LOW-CARBON AND CARBON-NEUTRAL —

These terms are used to describe events with low levels of carbon emissions or with compensated emissions, i.e., small carbon footprints.

ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS —

Food that, ideally, has been produced without using any pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides), mineral fertilisers, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), while maintaining high standards of animal welfare.

RECYCLING —

The processing and re-use of wastes from production and consumption. For example, scrap iron may be melted so that

it can be used in new products.

RENEWABLE ENERGY —

Energy from sources that are constantly renewed and that, therefore, are not limited by depletion of resources. The main types of renewable energy are solar energy, wind energy, hydropower, geothermal energy, and renewable biomass.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT —

Refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

UN - UNITED NATIONS' RELEVANT FORUMS:

UNCED - "EARTH SUMMIT" —

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. The Conference was the starting point of the conventions on climate and biodiversity, and of the NGO movement on the areas. (Participation: 172 states, 2400 NGOs and 17,000 people on the parallel NGO Global Forum. Follow-up: Rio+10, and Rio +20 Conferences.) www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html

UNFCCC COP - UN CLIMATE CONFERENCE —

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Conference of Parties. The international treaty has a Conference Of Parties (COP) each year, e.g., the COP15 was in Copenhagen in 2009, and COP21 was in Paris in 2015. The Parties are governments. (Participation at COP21: 197 states, 10,000 governmental officials 7000 civil society observers, 3000 media.) www.unfccc.int

WASTE SEPARATION —

Before any material can be recycled, it must be separated from the raw waste and sorted. Separation is done by individual citizens who collect papers, glass, plastic, etc. separately and place them at the curb for collection.

WATER FOOTPRINT —

An indicator of freshwater use that shows the direct and indirect water use of a producer or consumer.

A whimsical illustration of a person skateboarding in space. The skateboarder is wearing a helmet and is positioned in the upper left quadrant. In the upper right, a globe of the Earth is shown. The background is a light gray with scattered white dots representing stars and faint, stylized clouds. At the bottom, there are simple line drawings of mountains and trees. The title "EARTH, OUR HOME" is written in large, bold, orange, hand-drawn letters in the center.

EARTH, OUR HOME

Our world is full of amazing things. Wildlife, hiking trails, challenging gravity in a skate park, late summer-night swims, delicious food, and unstoppable laughter among friends, our Earth supports them all. Our world is complex and, currently, hospitable. It has allowed us humans to multiply to a population of more than 7 billion.

Throughout our history, we have used the Earth's resources to cater to our needs and to develop our civilization: from mud huts to skyscrapers, from hunting and gathering food to large-scale industrial agriculture, from small tribes to complex social systems. Looking back, not all of our choices and developments have been wise. Thus far, the planet has been resilient enough to continue supporting us. We are consuming too much, too fast, however.

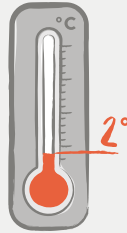
Just as consistent overeating leads to harmful excess body weight and eventually causes health problems, our overconsumption of the Earth's resources is bringing undesirable consequences. We are experiencing more extreme weather events, rising sea levels, rapid warming of the atmosphere and of the ocean. The symptoms are showing. Now what?

This guide really is an invitation to you to save the world. This is our best shot: to change the ways in which individuals and societies think and behave on a practical level, thus also changing the workings of our economies. The events that you organize are an important part of this in two ways: first, because you can reduce the impact that these events have on the environment, and second, because you can provide both the organizers and the participants with the experience of doing things differently. The hope is that you and others will find value in being part of the solution to the current climate crisis.



"THE SCIENCE NOW SHOWS WITH 95% CERTAINTY THAT HUMAN ACTIVITY IS THE DOMINANT CAUSE OF OBSERVED WARMING SINCE THE MID-20TH CENTURY."

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013



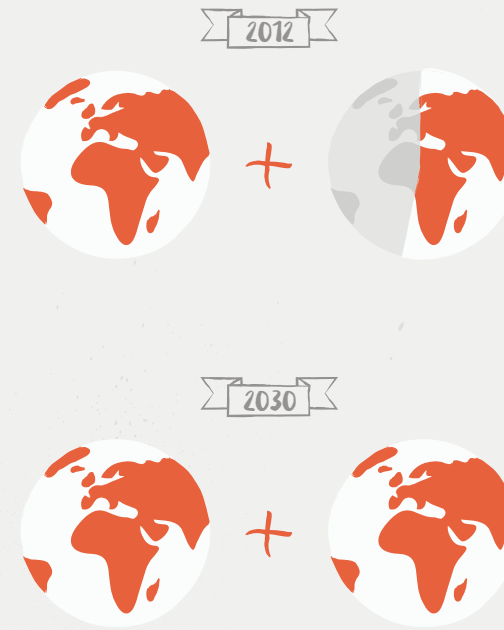
"The UNFCCC COP21 Paris Agreement aims to keep a global temperature rise this century well below 2°C and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The 1.5°C limit is a significantly safer defense line against the worst impacts of a changing climate."

www.unfccc.int 2015

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

The Earth is a complex physical system with many forces at play. From movement of tectonic plates (think: earthquakes and volcanoes) to air masses and water streams that make up the world and the climate as we have known it. Most of these forces are not observable to the human eye, but are being subjected to much exciting observation and scientific research just the same.

The Gulf Stream, for example, is one of the strong ocean currents that carries warm water from the sunny tropics to higher latitudes, bringing warm water masses from the Gulf of Mexico up towards Northern Europe. Even if the water cools as it crosses this great distance, the current is strong enough to create a milder climate in the North European region. What would happen if, all of a sudden, this current changed direction or lost its speed of traveling? Likely... a cold, cold future for a large part of Europe.



Did you know that in 2012, the world average Ecological Footprint equaled 1.54 Planet Equivalents? This means that it would take 1.54 Earths to support humanity's current lifestyle, or in other words, it takes the Earth one year and six months to regenerate what we use in a year.

If current population and consumption trends continue, by the 2030s, we will need the equivalent of 2 Earths to support us. And of course, we only have one.

Global Footprint Network, 2015



Before we go into action and events, here are some concepts that you need to understand, stated in very simple terms.

WHAT IS IT, EXACTLY?



GLOBAL WARMING

Increasing concentrations of GHGs in the atmosphere reduce the heat radiated to outer space by the atmosphere. This goes on until the earth is heated to a level at which the warmer earth again sends out as much heat as it receives from the sun.



MELTING OF GLACIERS

Because of increases in the temperatures of the air and oceans, glaciers in the Arctic, Antarctic, and high mountain ranges are melting at an alarmingly fast pace.



SEA-LEVEL RISE

Due to melting of glaciers and expansion of the water in the oceans with increasing water temperatures, sea levels are rising. Coastline land is being lost to the sea.



DEFORESTATION

Due to land use for agriculture, infrastructure, and industry needs (e.g., to produce timber or palm oil), forests are being cut down at a speed that is faster than the pace at which they can grow back.



SOIL DEPLETION AND EROSION

Deforestation and intensive farming deplete the soil. Depending on the geographical location and local climate, these practices expose it to greater warming, humidity, cold, or drought, stressing or destroying the soil biome that supports healthy plant life and leading to erosion.



EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Because of sea-level rise and increasing ocean temperatures, rates of ocean-water evaporation are higher. Movements of air masses and currents are shifting. These changes bring more heavy storms and typhoons as well as increasing rainfall, heat, cold waves, and droughts.

WHAT'S BAD ABOUT IT?

Increased temperature of air, ground, and sea. The more GHGs, the more heating. The warming also changes rainfall and produces more storms. The process is slow and uneven. Heating will go on for centuries. Some parts of the earth are hit harder than others.

The white (ice) surface of Earth decreases. Less light and warmth from the Sun are reflected from a now darker surface, speeding up global warming. Sea levels rise and fresh water from glaciers decreases.

People lose their homes and livelihoods to water. Flooding become more frequent and more extensive. Salt water invades nearby fresh-water supplies.

Trees ensure the natural process of air filtration. Through photosynthesis, trees absorb CO₂ that's in the air and produce oxygen. Fewer tree do less photosynthesis, leaving more carbon dioxide in the air to cause more global warming. Territories cleared of forests actually change the movements of wind and air masses.

It is harder to grow good harvests or certain food cultures. More chemicals are used to boost plant growth. Some chemicals, e.g., nitrogen fertilizers, come with a lot of GHG emissions. The agro-chemicals contaminate ground waters and endanger various animal species. Soil depletion releases CO₂.

Extensive damage is done to populated areas, to populations, and to infrastructure, with loss of human lives, destruction of nature, and more extinctions of species. There is inequality among populations as to how much they are hit, because of their geographical locations, not because of how much they've participated in causing the problem.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

Decarbonize our societies to keep global warming between 1.5 - 2°C by reducing GHG. CO₂ is the most abundant GHG, and most of it is from burning fossil fuel. So, stop burning fossil fuels! Stop supporting the oil and coal industries. Introduce strict regulations for factories and transport that are the main polluters.

Decarbonize, to slow down global warming and the melting of glaciers. Protect glaciers from being altered and harmed by human and industrial activities. Reduce pollution (particles of smoke) on glaciers that speeds up the melting as pollutants trap heat.

Decarbonize to limit global warming and the melting of the glaciers.

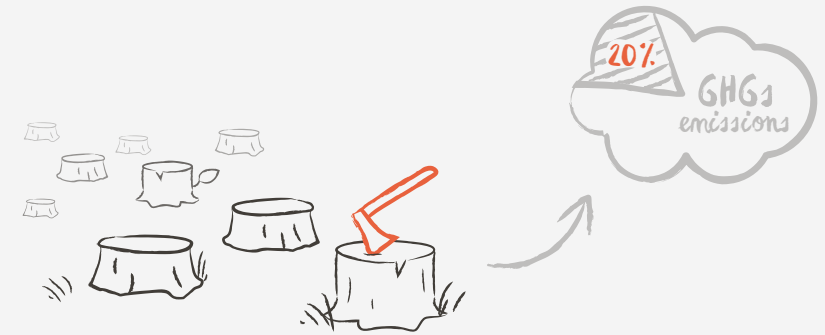
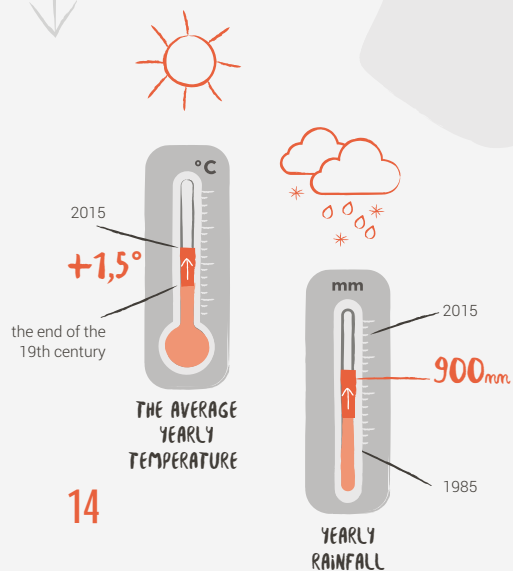
Protect forests and trees. Apply sustainable practices of forestry. Plant trees, green environments. Reduce timber and paper use. Use only sustainably produced wood, paper, and other wood products.

Stop deforestation and stop using products made with deforestation (unsustainable timber, oil, soybean products). Practice and support organic farming including use of biological means of protecting plants from insects and illness or of boosting growth. Use plantings to reduce soil erosion.

Decarbonize! Reduce fossil-fuel use, reduce deforestation, etc., to decrease the effects of global warming. It is as simple as that. Reduce emissions and adapt to the changing conditions.

Due to the combination of these and other factors, the climate of the Earth is changing. The problem is that it is changing in ways that threaten the world as we know it. We see water scarcity and pollution, drought that leads to sickness and famine. Increasing numbers of people need to leave their homes, or their livelihoods are destroyed because of the effects of climate change. Acidification of oceans and destruction of ecosystems lead to extinction of species. These are just a few of many ill effects.

Climate change doesn't mean the climate is "just getting warmer". In some parts of the world it means milder winters. In other parts of the world, it means devastating tornados, drought, floods, heatwaves or having much colder weather than usual. The western part of Denmark gets over 900 mm rainfall annually - this is a 20-30 % increase compared to 30 years ago. The average temperature in Denmark has increased by almost 1.5°C since the end of the 19th century. In Belarus, approximately 80% of all extreme weather events occur during the warm period of the year. As a result of climate change, in the south of the country, a new warmer climatic zone has appeared, with a short and warm winter that gives it the country's longest growing season.



"... forest destruction is the second leading cause of carbon pollution, causing 20% of total greenhouse gas emissions."

FSC, 2015

More hours of bright sunshine increase the risks of skin cancer and birthmark cancer. Denmark has some of the highest numbers of these types of cancer cases in the whole world. They have tripled over the last 30 years.

In short, we can't assume that dangerous changes will happen only 'far in the future'. They're happening now.

This guide was developed because we need a change, and we need it now. Failing that, we're about to flip planet Earth toward developments that might not support human life any more, at least not as we know it now.

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

Green lifestyle, sustainable solutions, greening the economy... the meanings of these phrases are unclear. Without clarity, there's a risk of falling into greenwashing, i.e., pretending to be environmentally friendly or applying some superficial and publicly visible practices while continuing business as usual.

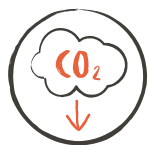
Terminology can be confusing, but here are possible interpretations to help you navigate through the issues.



RENEWABLE ENERGY

WHAT IS IT, EXACTLY?

Energy from sources that are constantly renewed and therefore are not limited by depletion of resources. These are generated from natural processes. The main types of renewable energy are solar energy, wind energy, hydropower, geothermal energy, and renewable biomass.



CARBON EMISSIONS REDUCTION, LOW-CARBON SOLUTIONS

Scenarios including various incentives or regulations to reduce CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere, mainly by using less energy, using more renewable energy, and reducing deforestation.



CLIMATE POLICY

Ways to reduce GHGs and adapt to climate change with political policies, involving legislation, regulations, binding targets, and subsidies. Climate policies are discussed on different levels. e.g., UN, EU, nationally and locally.



SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

It's a lifestyle that reduces an individual's or society's use of natural and personal resources. Practitioners of sustainable living often attempt to reduce their carbon footprints by altering their choices of transportation, energy consumption, and diet.

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT?

The energy resources involved in these processes are unlimited and exist for free. They don't require drilling or excavation, unlike fossil fuels. They have few harmful side products, such as the pollution and immense CO₂ emissions from burning fossil fuels for energy production.

Reducing energy demand is a win-win situation. The 100%-renewable-by-2050 energy-supply scenarios are based on a factor-4 increase of energy efficiency, which means that only 25 % of today's energy should be needed for the same service (light, space-heating, transport, etc.).

Legal regulations are binding. They are real forces for change. Taxes, subsidies, and national targets also make a difference.

Proponents of sustainable living aim to conduct their lives in ways that are consistent with sustainability, that are in natural balance, and that respect the Earth's natural ecology and cycles.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

Choose electricity providers that provide renewable energy. Install solar panels or wind generators where feasible. Install renewable energy, such as solar heating, in your house if you can. Promote renewable energy.

Participate in NGO information campaigns to educate the public on what you can do at your home, what kind of support schemes are available, etc. Reduce your own impact; e.g., use LED lights, ride a bicycle or public transport, fly less often, and compensate for your emissions, e.g., from air travel.

Be active and lobby on behalf of your NGO. Participate in hearings, petitions, debates, and expert teams. Stronger civil-society engagement should counter the fossil-fuel industry lobby.

To live sustainably is a choice that everyone should make. It requires us to change our lifestyles and habits, but eventually, it could save our species. Make it fun and "trendy". Work on it together with others. Help others to understand the motivation.



DIVESTMENT

WHAT IS IT, EXACTLY?

Choosing not to support and invest in fossil-fuel companies, namely the oil, gas, and coal industries, as well as other businesses that have a significant negative impact on the environment.



NATURE PROTECTION, BIODIVERSITY

Nature is being damaged and biodiversity is shrinking because of global warming, air pollution (such as acid rain), and increased human pressure on protected areas (visiting, picking plants and interfering with wildlife, e.g., during nesting seasons of birds).



CONSCIENTIOUS SPENDING

Being more careful about where you put your money. By buying or investing, you support the source companies and producers, along with the way they choose to work.



ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Building higher dams (Holland), enlarge the capacity of sewage systems (Denmark), establish town parks, green roofs, move people's homes away from low areas by the sea, and change agriculture schemes.

For sources with more detailed information, check the "Resource" list at the end of this Guide.

The above is a simplified explanation of climate change and related global environmental processes.

The main point to take away is that these facts and figures may be alarming, but they also present a clear need and an opportunity to change our ways.

WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT?

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

If we stopped investing in and using their products, a large part of the mining and oil/gas extraction business would be shut down. With no investments, the fossil-fuel supply will gradually decline.

Use and lobby for banks/pension funds that invest in environmentally benign businesses. Lobby banks/pension funds and other investors to change policies to protect the environment better.

By learning about protected plant and animal species, people also learn about the species' habitats and their needs for protection.

Work to reduce global warming and air pollution. Help to build infrastructure (e.g., nature trails) that would direct visitors to specific areas, thus protecting the rest of area.

If we stopped using their products, a large part of the mining and oil/gas extraction business would be shut down.

Buy fair-trade, second-hand, and organic products. Recycle, upcycle, use sustainable transport, and use this guideline when organising an event. :-)

Adaptation can help only up to a certain extent, and only if we limit global warming in time.

Inform others that the more CO2 reduction we do now, the less adaptation will be necessary.

There are a lot of ways to help improve our treatment of the Earth and the conditions that we create for ourselves as humans. The most important thing is to start somewhere. Start anywhere.

So now, let's get on to planning and implementing events!!



Form a team
& make decisions
(planning, communication)



Place, &
getting there
(venue, resources,
transport)

PLANNING THE EVENT



What we'll do &
what we'll need
(activities, food, materials)



What will be the result
(communication, waste,
activities)

This chapter is about the exciting time when ideas are up in the air and many choices are yet to be made. Whether you are planning an event for 5 or 50 participants, whether it will last a day or two weeks, you likely will invest quite a lot of time and effort in making it happen. The goals, the content, the practical details, the people involved, the costs... all the bits and details of it will require attention.

While you are in the planning phase, you will need to make many decisions about the topics described in this document. In fact, how many of these tips and of your own climate-friendly ideas you will be able to implement depends largely on how you plan for it. So, before you dive into making your event happen, here are some issues worth considering during the planning phase.

GETTING EVERYONE ON THE SAME PAGE

It can be useful to have a preliminary meeting with your team. Share some background information, and discuss why you think it is important to act upon the issues described in this guide.

It is more likely that your team members will stick to a commitment or a new climate-friendly practice if they know the reason behind these practices and the benefits thereof. It is also good for your team members to be able to explain the cause to participants and supporters. Make sure that the people involved, from volunteers to funders to invited speakers and supporters of your organisation, are aware of your efforts and of why they are

important. Lead by example and inspire others to do their part of the job!

It is all right, though, if not everyone is excited about changing some habits and practices. Focus on those who are willing so to do, and see where it takes you.

APPLY, TEST, EXPERIMENT

The planning phase can be a great testing field for ideas that you want to implement for your event. It allows you to try them out at a smaller scale first, to see how it works and where some problems may occur. Thus, you'll already have some hands-on experience that you can apply to the event that you are organizing.

This goes not only for certain activities, but also for how you organize your planning meetings, your daily office or team work, and even your personal habits. Experiment, to discover new knowledge for yourself (like, where to buy fair-trade coffee). You will be much better prepared to apply certain practices to your event and to the work of your organisation.

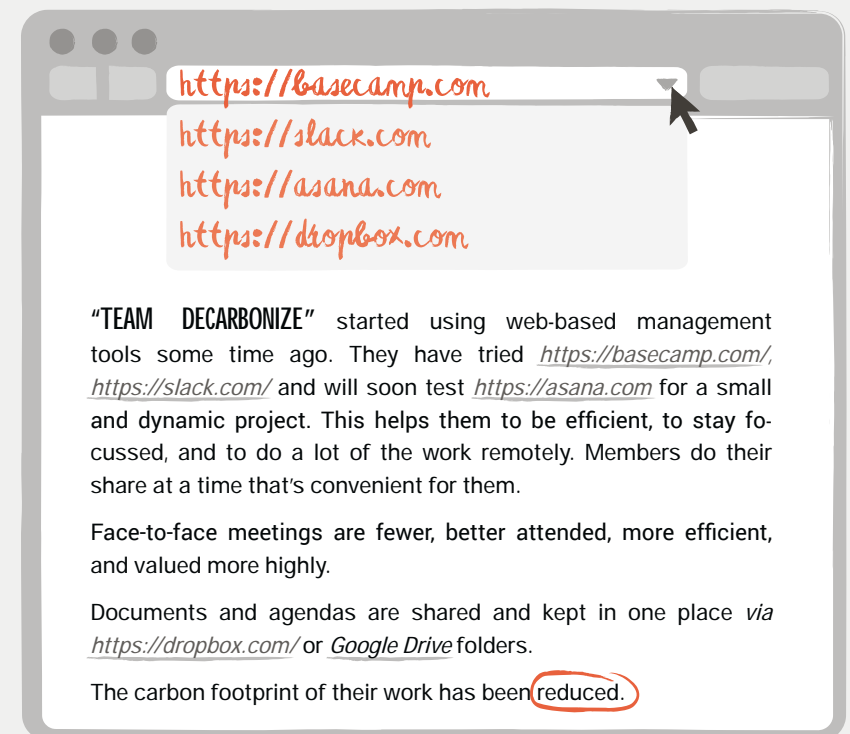
KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND WHY YOU ARE DOING IT

The choices that you make can present you with various dilemmas. You might find the perfect venue, but then need to compromise on costs and carbon footprint of transportation because of its remote location. Or you find a caterer who uses local products, but can't provide vegetarian meals. As in life generally, there is often no universal answer or one right way to do things. You will have to hand-pick your options and create your own approach.

The same goes for the costs of your event. Buying biodegradable materials will likely be more expensive than, say,

plastic cups and plates. On the other hand, providing tap water with mint or cucumbers instead of bottled water or fizzy drinks for refreshments will help you save money. There are reusable items worth investing in, such as easily transportable waste separation bins, whiteboards, and recycled large-format paper rolls, but you will have to make choices. Keep in mind that some investigation might be needed even prior to looking for funding to know the costs so that you can include them in the budget, especially if you are trying out something new.

Think about the lifecycle of the waste. If the waste will not be recycled, or placed in a landfill, but will be burned, it makes less sense to buy expensive biodegradable plastic.



"TEAM DECARBONIZE" started using web-based management tools some time ago. They have tried <https://basecamp.com/>, <https://slack.com/> and will soon test <https://asana.com> for a small and dynamic project. This helps them to be efficient, to stay focussed, and to do a lot of the work remotely. Members do their share at a time that's convenient for them.

Face-to-face meetings are fewer, better attended, more efficient, and valued more highly.

Documents and agendas are shared and kept in one place via <https://dropbox.com/> or [Google Drive](#) folders.

The carbon footprint of their work has been reduced.



THE BIG BEGINNING AND PREPARING THE TEAM

- Which environmental topics do you most want to take into consideration?
- Which areas could have the biggest environmental impact in regard to your event?
- Which topics or tips are the easiest or the most fun for you?
- Narrow it down to a list of actions that you hope to implement for your event.
- Discuss each item with your team and explain why it matters.
- If needed, organize a workshop for the team so they get to know the practices that you want to put in place and feel comfortable using them.
- Decide on tasks and responsibilities, making sure someone keeps an eye on the implementation of climate-friendly choices.



MEETINGS

- Apply the agreed principles and practices to get some experience and get used to new ways of doing things (e.g., whiteboard instead of papers; climate-friendly packaging; water-saving measures; footprint created by transportation; locally sourced, seasonal snacks; tap drinking water; etc.).
- Do a share of the work via online tools and phone to decrease transportation, utility, and material costs that occur with face-to-face meetings.

- Consider organizing meetings in a place that showcases or supports climate-friendly solutions.

OFFICE WORK MATTERS



- Reduce the amount of printing: print less, enlarge page margins, decrease the font size, print on both sides of the paper.
- Use paper with one side already used (old posters, flipcharts, print-outs) for notes or for printing internal documents.
- Use whiteboard, blackboard, screen-sharing, or projection instead of paper when possible.
- Buy recycled or ecolabeled (e.g., FSC) paper and stationery made from recycled materials.
- Apply water- and electricity-saving measures in the office building, including energy efficiency of office equipment.
- Provide local or fair-trade products for snacks and to make tea or coffee. Use reusable plates, cups, and utensils.
- Organize your own waste-separation system.
- Consider sharing, borrowing, and upcycling options, or buy second-hand goods where appropriate.

see chapter
"Materials, Supplies,
and Services"

see chapter
"Water
and Energy"

see chapter
"Food"

see chapter
"Waste"

HOW ABOUT MONEY AND FUNDING?



- Save money by using resources wisely, buying second-hand items for a cheaper price, or getting in-kind donations for free by sharing with other organisations.
- Look into climate-friendly DIY (do it yourself) or upcycling solutions to cut down on costs.

see chapter
"Materials, Supplies,
and Services"

- Consider the extra costs of climate-friendly solutions and include them in the budget no later than the planning phase.
- Communicate to potential funders your plans for applying climate-friendly solutions. Explain the related costs and savings made.
- Consider potential sources of funding for your event as well as your partners and vendors. Make sure that your choices are consistent with your principles and the cause you support.
- Determine whether there are foundations or institutions that specifically support climate-friendly practices and that could fund part of, or otherwise help with, your event.



IT'S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

- Although the problem is dead serious, you don't have to be. Make it fun for yourself and others to change habits and to understand the impact of our own actions.
- Focus on what you can and will do, and don't feel guilty about what you can't do now. Going step-by-step is okay. Really.
- Prioritize the ideas that you will be implementing. Think about what is easiest to do in your current situation, what brings the greatest benefit in the long term, and what has the biggest impact on carbon reduction.
- Persistence: gradually apply an increasing number of tips and tricks to your practices in your daily work and in organizing events.

- Keep a long-term perspective, both on the changes achieved by applying climate-friendly practices and on the changes that you start applying in your organization. It might seem to be a little change right now, but it will be huge when you look back after a while.
- Keep track of the practices that you apply and of the differences that they have made. Otherwise, you might not notice or, later on, be able to explain what you have achieved.
- Remember to mark some milestones in your path to becoming more climate-friendly. Let your team and others know when you have reached them.

A hand-drawn illustration of a person with dark, curly hair sleeping in a bed. They are lying on their back with their arms behind their head. A thought bubble is drawn above their head, containing the text 'LOCATION, VENUE, AND ACCOMMODATIONS' in a bold, orange, hand-drawn font. The bubble is surrounded by small icons: a crescent moon, stars, location pins, and a compass rose. The background is a light gray with a subtle pattern of small dots and stars.

LOCATION, VENUE, AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Choosing the location and the type of venue and/or accommodation for your event is one of the key decisions for many reasons, including how climate-friendly your event can be. Think about the different aspects that matter in choosing the venue. Take note of the opportunities to implement low-carbon solutions that come with each of the places that you are considering.

LOCATION: ACCESSIBILITY VS. OTHER BENEFITS

The topic of your event, the number of participants, and the distance over which they would have to travel will affect the format of the event and, thus, spaces needed for activities.

If you are planning a residential event with participants staying overnight, keeping it slightly relaxed, using locally sourced food, natural materials for workshops, and a large accessible space for outdoor activities, look for places on the outskirts of the city, or away from it.

If high turnout is expected or/and the event allows for a changing number of participants taking part in different parts of the programme, make sure the location is strategic and very easily accessible.

A central location, easy and safe to reach on foot, by bicycle, or by public transportation, is important if you want to encourage people to leave their cars at home.

If it is a multiple-day event, think about the well-being of participants. Is there green space around, with good air quality?

Are the surroundings safe? Do they say something about or provide opportunities to interact with the local society?

Remember that spending your (and funders') money is an investment through which you also support the local economy and, in particular, those whose services or supplies you buy. Choosing a location could also be influenced by social and economic factors, for example, to support a local community, or it can be that the local community supports the cause with free venue or services.

If you can't have the participants stay right where the event is taking place, try to find a combination of venue and accommodation that both follow some of the low-carbon principles. Try to place them within walking distance or a short bicycle ride of each other to avoid the need for transportation.

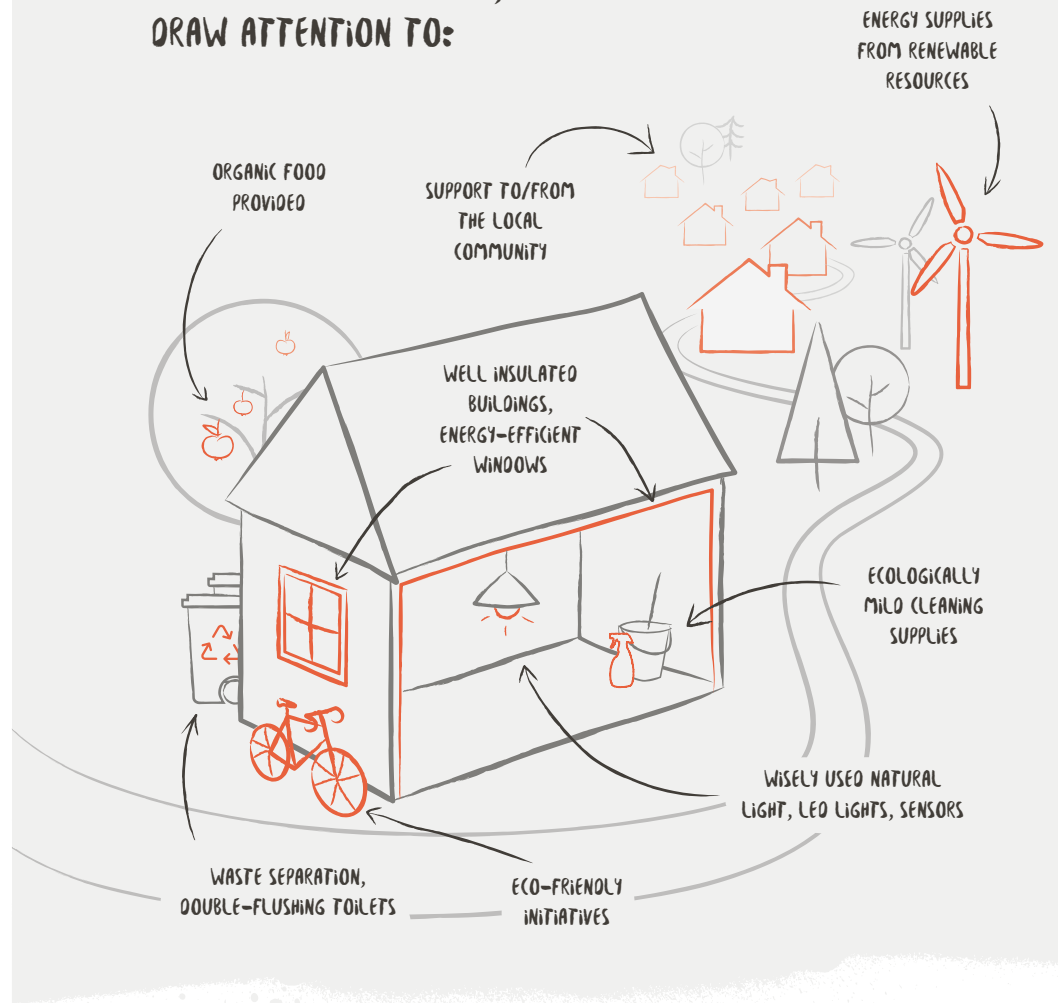
Consider, in practical terms, how accessible the possible venue is for people with special needs such as impaired vision, limited movement capacities, heavy allergies, and so on. Social diversity and full participation are important principles of sustainability!

THE VALUES AND PRACTICES OF THE VENUE

Most venues have a certain character, depending on the ideas or lifestyles of the people who operate them.

- See if you can find a venue where you could showcase good practices of low-carbon solutions and/or innovative techniques that they have put in place and practice.
- Communicate your will gently to the owners or operators of the venue. We believe that most of them will be open to special requests.
- Consider finding a venue that is connected to an organization or community working for a good cause: whether it's

WHEN CHOOSING A VENUE, DRAW ATTENTION TO:



special attention to the well-being of their guests, hosting community events, planting trees, or supporting a charity or activist group.

- An easy way to single out the better possible venues and accommodations is to check for certificates or awards that they might have, such as for Green Key, eco-tourism, sustainability, and tourism.



"TEAM DECARBONIZE"
suggests choosing...



Green Key

Green Key (Den Grønne Nøgle until 2009), an international eco-label for accommodations and conference centers. More: www.green-key.org.



Green Certificate (Zaļais sertifikāts), a national tourism eco-label in Latvia. More: www.celotajs.lv



White Stork (Belij Aist), a national tourism eco-label in Belarus.



Danish Gold, Silver, and Bronze Eco-label, national tourism ecolabels in Denmark. More: www.oekologisk-spisemaerke.dk



"TEAM DECARBONIZE" recommends:

Guest house "Koinonia". In May, 2015, our organizations had a partner meeting in Belarus near Minsk, in a venue that is certified by White Stork. It has a sewage treatment system, solar photovoltaic cell, LED lighting, and separate waste collection.

The Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy in North West Denmark. This is a center for demonstration, education, research, and conferences, located in a large park in Denmark. Its features include exhibition and test stations of small windmills, solar cells (PV), a green wastewater cleaning system, a bio-dome, el-bicycles, and plant-oil-fuelled cars.

More: www.folkecenter.net

If the venue doesn't quite meet your needs and wishes:

- Talk to them and negotiate some improvements or extra services that they could offer to accommodate your event. Suggest solutions that could be applied and maybe you'll encourage them to try something new.
- Listen to what they have to say about their limitations or reasons why certain things would be hard for them to implement. That is also a learning experience, and maybe you can spark their interest to take on some new practises in their work!
- Do it yourself. There are plenty of tips in this guide that you can apply for yourself if the venue doesn't provide specific services. Put up reminder signs to save water; bring your own trash bins for sorting waste; arrange snack breaks and drinks yourself, the way you want it done. Don't be shy.

Finally, make your own list of criteria to use in choosing the venue and accommodations, then proceed. The upcoming chapters also give you further ideas of how to choose a good venue as well as of various practices that you, yourself, could try to introduce.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

- If you consider organizing your event outdoors, in nature, think about how you will provide for the necessities and manage things like drinking water, cooking/serving food, comfortable enough sleeping, medical assistance, and avoiding any negative impact on the surroundings.
- You can even get some infrastructure yourself, like arrange to have a tap-water tank for an outdoors event.



LOCATION CRITERIA

- Reasonable travel distance for most participants.
- Easy and safe to reach on foot, by bicycle, and on public transportation via a nearby stop (ideally train or public bus).
- The venue and accommodations are either in the same place or located within walking distance of each other.
- Proximity to needed supplies, to (preferably local) fresh food products, and to materials that are hard to transport.
- Location and nearby attractions that are connected somehow to the event topic or objectives.
- Direct surroundings that contribute to the well-being of participants (e.g., green space, low noise levels, absence of distractions).
- Opportunities to interact with the local community.
- Proximity to emergency services (ambulance terminal, hospital, fire fighters).



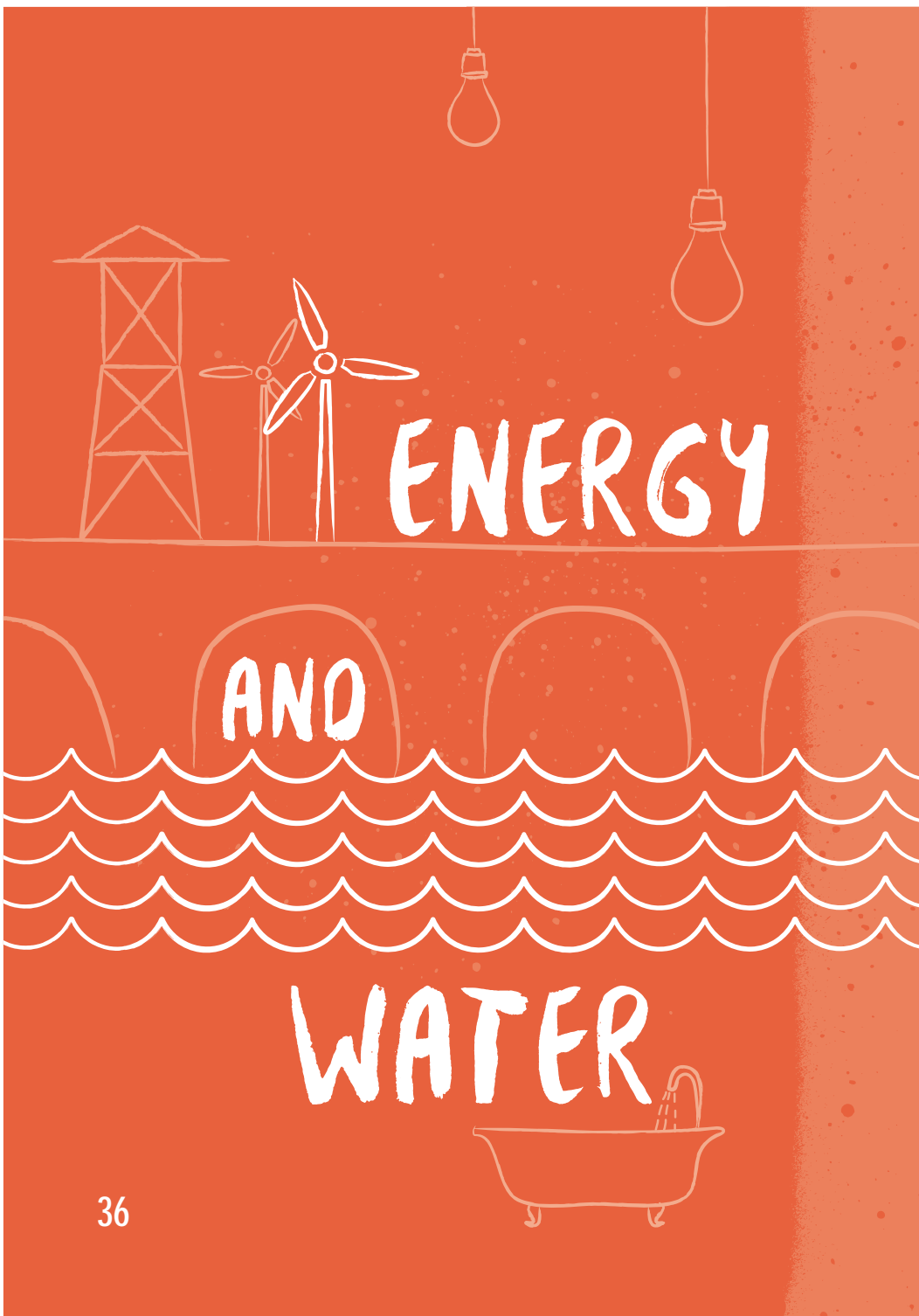
VALUES AND PRACTICES

See chapter
"Energy and
Water" for
more detail

- The venue implements measures for saving resources such as water, electricity, energy for heating.
- Do they use renewable energy, or even produce it with solar panels, wind turbines, or hydraulic power?
- Do they have a nature-friendly sewage and wastewater management system?
- Do they separate waste? Do they make their own compost?

- Do they provide on-site cooking facilities or catering?
- Is a healthy, balanced vegetarian or vegan menu available?
- Do food products come from the surrounding area, or are they from a supermarket with imported goods? Do they support local and/or organic farming and use fairtrade products? Might they have their own garden to produce some of the food for the kitchen?
- Rooms should have plenty of natural light coming in. This not only will lift the mood and help everyone focus, but also will save electricity!
- What supplies do they use? Are they concerned about using ecologically friendly supplies (soaps, shampoos, detergents, etc.), keeping uses of chemicals to a minimum?
- Do they have a record of accommodating people with special needs, and have there been complaints?
- Do they offer event organizers any equipment and materials, either for free or for an acceptable fee? Having equipment (an overhead beamer, large screen) and environment-friendly materials such as recycled paper rolls for flipchart, or a whiteboard, available on-site helps you save time, possibly also money, and you'll have less material to transport to the venue.
- Do they have any recreational or exploratory tours or tracks nearby? Are they aware of and investing in the bettering of the natural surroundings?

see
chapter
"Food"



Water and energy are two of the “heavyweights” when it comes to resources and impact on the environment. They are needed and used for so many everyday things that we are often unaware we are even using them.

Depending on the kind of event that you are organizing, the amounts of resources used can vary significantly. Yet, the overall goals are always to minimize consumption of energy and water during the event, and to apply or to support good practices such as energy efficiency, water conservation, and the use of renewable energy.

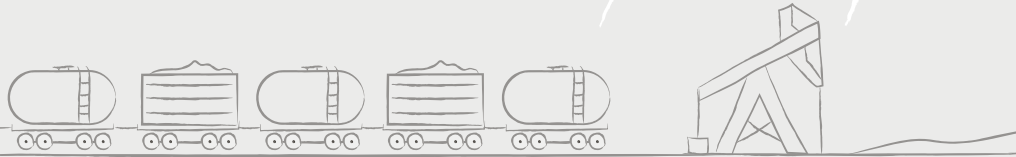
ENERGY PRODUCTION AND USE

How is energy produced? Ideally, by capturing renewable sources that exist in nature: wind, sun, hydro, and sustainable use of biomass (wood, straw, manure, etc.). Currently, however, a majority of electricity is produced in thermal power stations by burning fossil fuels (e.g., coal, peat, natural gas, petroleum). There are coal plants in Europe that release more than 30 million tons of CO₂ every year! Such power stations increase air pollution and health risks, contribute heavily to GHG emissions, and in some cases, contaminate water. The older, more inefficient coal-power plants are the worst polluters.

Electricity is also produced by nuclear reactors, which create very little pollution in normal operation. Nuclear power, however, poses huge problems with releases of radioactive radiation in cases of accidents as well as during nuclear fuel production and waste-handling. No permanent solution for the disposal of nuclear waste has been found.

"The world's energy systems must undergo a tremendous change. The coal, oil, and natural gas that fuel the majority of electricity generation produce more than one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions."

United Nations Environment Programme,
The Emissions Gap Report, 2012



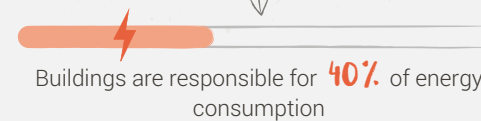
EKOenergy is a label for electricity, managed by the European EKO-energy network, a network of more than 30 environmental NGOs from over 20 European countries. This is the only electricity label that has resulted from a pan-European consultation process, that works on the whole European market, and that is recognized by stakeholders in all European countries. More: www.ekoenergy.org

Energy is not only electricity, but also heat for houses and industries as well as energy for transport. District heating is hot water produced in a heating plant, which can be a cogeneration plant, which produces electricity and heat. The sustainable forms of heating are solar heating, geothermal heating, and sustainable biomass. To some extent, heat pumps are also sustainable, as it is a very efficient way of using electricity for heating. The non-sustainable forms of heating include: fossil-fuel heating, such as oil, gas, coal, and peat. So if there is an option to go for renewable energy – do! Support the shift that really, really needs to happen. If there is no such option, make sure that you do what you can to save energy so that the energy demand decreases, lessening the impacts of energy production.

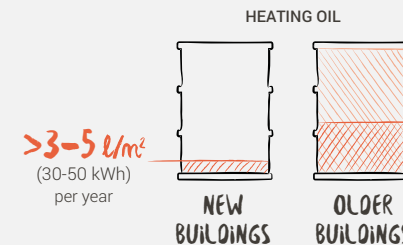


"By improving the energy efficiency of buildings, we could reduce total EU energy consumption by 5% to 6% and lower CO₂ emissions by about 5%."

European Commission, 2015



35% of the EU's buildings are over 50 years old



Some buildings even require up to
60 l/m²
(600 kWh)

Buying "green" electricity: Retail electricity competition is allowed in the EU, and you may be able to purchase "green" power from an alternative electricity supplier.

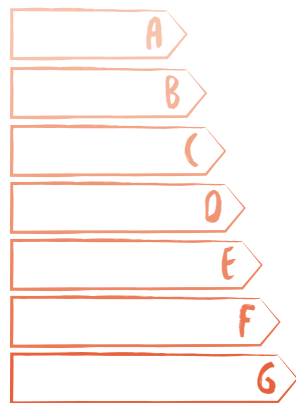
While mostly electricity is provided via the grid through connection to a regional or nation-wide system of electricity cables, for an event, it also could be produced by static or portable power generators. Alternatively, you might find venues or accommodation places where the establishment produces energy for their own use, using solar panels, solar cells, or small hydraulic power stations.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF BUILDINGS AND APPLIANCES

Energy efficiency covers areas like lighting, heating, and cooling, as well as electrical devices. There is always a double benefit: reducing emissions also means saving money.

Choosing energy efficient appliances:

MORE EFFICIENT



LESS EFFICIENT

EU Energy Labeling / EU Ecodesign Directive: Cool Products Campaign

The European Union's two policy tools to drive up the performance of household and commercial products: Ecodesign, and Energy Labelling. These regulations drive the market toward better products without harming industry or hiking up the price of goods. The aim is to design appliances in a way that takes into consideration the whole lifecycle of the product, helps cut emissions, and reduces operating costs.

More than 40 product groups are covered by the compulsory energy labeling. Some labels show not only the product's electricity use but also its performance.

More: www.coolproducts.eu

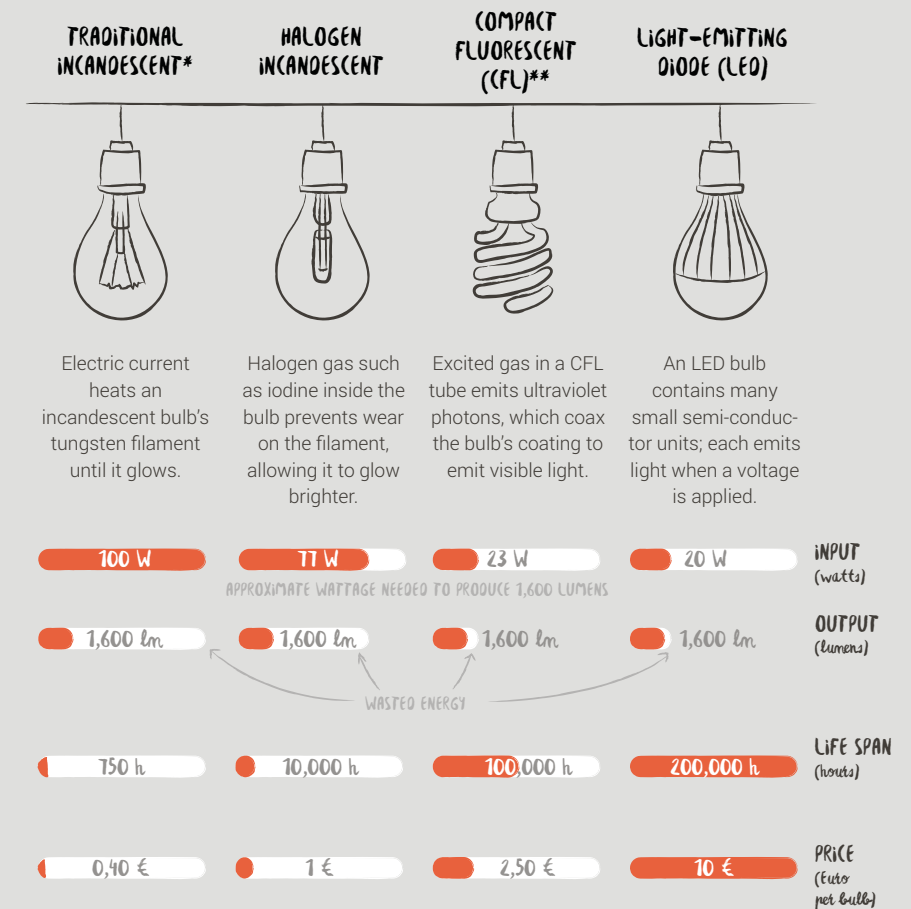


Energy Star is an international standard for energy-efficient consumer products. It was created in 1992 in the United States. Since then, the Energy Star Program has been adopted by many countries all over the world. Devices carrying the Energy Star service mark, such as computer products and peripherals, buildings, and other products, generally use 20–30% less energy than that required by the US federal standards. As standards improve, older products with Energy Star ratings often use more energy than is allowed for new products sold in the EU.

More: www.energystar.gov

LIGHT BULBS

There has been a light-bulb revolution in recent decades, resulting in more energy-efficiency lighting technology. The choice is up to consumers, so here is how they are different from each other:

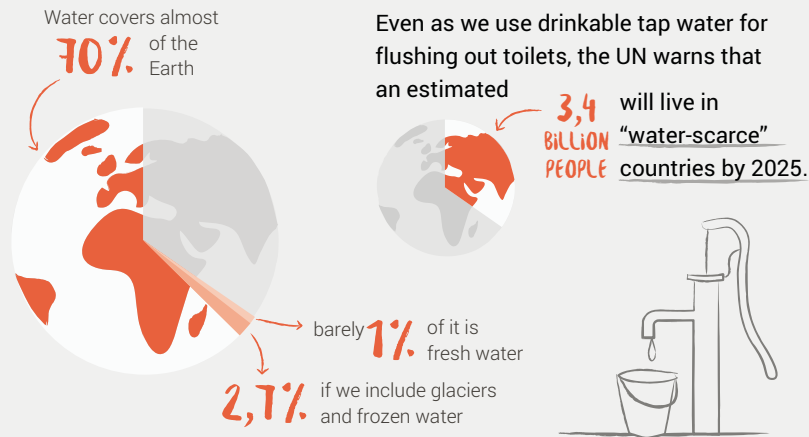


* Traditional bulbs have been out of the EU market since 2012. This led to mass production of LED bulbs, and decrease of their prices.

** Take into account that CFL bulbs cannot be recycled because they contain Mercury, so think twice before you choose them.

THE ISSUE WITH WATER

The pollution of surface and underground water, together with overexploitation of underground water (aquifers), is an increasing problem in most countries. Some pollution is due to increased fertilizer runoff (nitrates, nitrites, pesticides), contamination from households, and industry. The quality of drinking water is also an acute problem in some countries due to high iron or natural arsenic content or due to hardness.



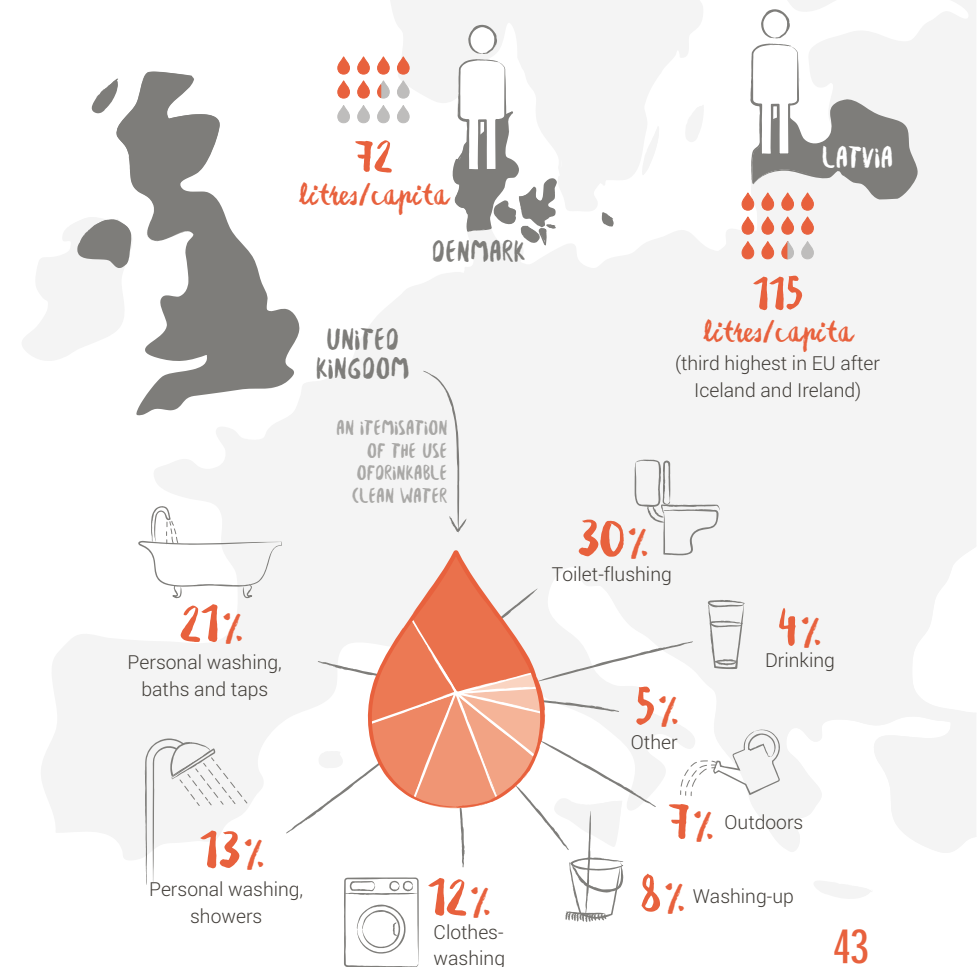
The less water you use, the less wastewater is produced, including blackwater from toilets as well as greywater from hand-washing, showers, and dishwashing. This, in turn, decreases the need and resource commitment to run sewage-cleaning systems.

In Denmark, the very high water consumption declined in the last decade. Metering, water savings through new installations that use less water (e.g., showers and toilets), water-saving campaigns, and a higher awareness of the environment among consumers, all combined with a rise in the price of water to bring down usage.

WATER USE

Did you know that an average European uses about 40-65 litres of water per day per capita in a household? If you include domestic water use, then public water consumption is higher, on average 75-80 liters/capita.

Eurostat and Waterwise, 2012



Aside from the water that we use directly, there is a water footprint produced in the process of making various goods that we use every day. Our water footprint includes the pressure that we exert on our freshwater resources by activities such as for producing our food and clothing for us.

l/min



European Water Label — an industry-backed voluntary initiative that has developed a classification scheme applicable throughout Europe. The label shows the maximal volume of water that the product will deliver, in litres per minute. Currently, 94 companies, among them some of the industry's largest apply the water label.

More: www.europeanwaterlabel.eu

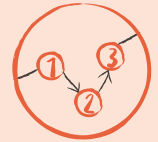


During events, **"TEAM DECARBONIZE"** recommends to provide tap water for drinking adding fruit, berries, or peppermint leaves. Besides, such solution reduces the number of plastic bottles after the event. For drinking water to be conveniently refilled also during other events, **Team Decarbonize** received multi-use water bottles as a present.

"TEAM DECARBONIZE" thinks that organisation of its cooperation for youth is a good example, since it always during the events spreads the message of importance of resource saving and reminds the key suggestions for reduction of water and electricity consumption.



PLAN AND CHOOSE



- By preference, choose venues with accommodations and office spaces that apply water-conservation and energy-efficiency policies. Check to make sure that facilities are in place to support these policies, e.g., thermostats, double-flushing toilets, etc.
- Avoid venues that use incandescent bulbs. Go for appropriate energy-efficient lighting.
- Prefer venues with installed sensors for switching the lights on and off where appropriate.
- Avoid buildings with badly closing and inefficient windows.
- If possible, monitor electricity usage before, during, and after the event to check for patterns and to test the effects of various energy-saving measures.
- Try to avoid places that use electricity for heating. District (centralized) heating, burning biomass, or solar cells are better options. In most countries, gas heating is also better than direct electric heating, because electricity comes from coal, lignite, peat, and oil.
- If possible, purchase green power for the event or offset its power consumption.
- Notify participants about the effort to save energy and use renewably sourced energy, including electricity.

SAVE WATER



- Select accommodations that promote water-conservation policies such as towel/linen laundry policies, by which guests can choose to refuse the daily cleaning of towels or linens.

- 3 liters of water are used to produce 1 liter of plastic-bottled water, and 2 kg of oil are used to produce 1 kg of plastic, so eliminating the use of plastic-bottled water is a great step. Try to use jars and big water dispensers instead of bottles.
- Make information available concerning how much waste is involved in using drinkable water to flush toilets. Drinkable water often comes from a water supply plant, and after it is flushed down the toilets, it goes to sewage plants. Thus, in addition to the water waste, energy is used to pump that same water into the houses as well as at the water supply and the sewage-cleaning plants, which, moreover, require further energy to be built and to operate.
- If appropriate, store greywater and/or rainwater and use it for toilet-flushing or gardening.
- Install a water-saving mechanism to reduce the amount of water used for flushing toilets. Conventional flushing toilets use 10 liters of water for each flush.
- If dual-flush toilets are available, promote and use the low-flush button for flushing urine, because it requires only 3-4 liters of water instead of 6-9 liters.
- If extra toilets are needed, rent toilet containers, which use less water. For example, vacuum toilets such as are used on airplanes and IC trains only use 0.5-0.8 l water per flush. Pissaires are also a good idea as they do not use water. You could consider compost toilets as well if that option is available.



TAKE ACTION

- Rely on natural lighting and ventilation as much as possible.
- Arrange ventilation to avoid unnecessary use of air conditioners.

- Produce and put up signs with facts or jokes on them about closing the taps, taking shorter showers, not flushing excessively, switching off lights, adjusting (or not) the thermostats, turning down the heating at night, etc., in relevant visible places.
- Don't flush down toilets items such as cotton pads, paper towels, etc. that should be discarded in a bin.
- Run practical workshops on energy and water topics to demonstrate how various systems or tips work.
- Prepare a short presentation or overview for the participants about your experiences with the implementation of energy-saving measures and about the impacts that it has.

See chapter
'Activities'



OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL ELECTRONICS

- Control standby energy consumption by unplugging devices, including chargers, when they are not actively in use.
- Encourage the use of laptops rather than of desktop computers, because laptops typically use less energy.
- Use/request office equipment (e.g., printers and projectors) that have an energy "A" label.
- Shut down or hibernate computers instead of putting them in the sleep mode.
- Use extension cords and power strips with "on/off" switches to make it easier to 'unplug' multiple devices at once.

An illustration of a road with various vehicles and trees. The road is orange with white dashed lines. There are two bicycles on the top section, a bus, a truck, and a car on the bottom section. There are also some trees and a small airplane in the background. The word 'TRANSPORT' is written in large, bold, black letters in the center.

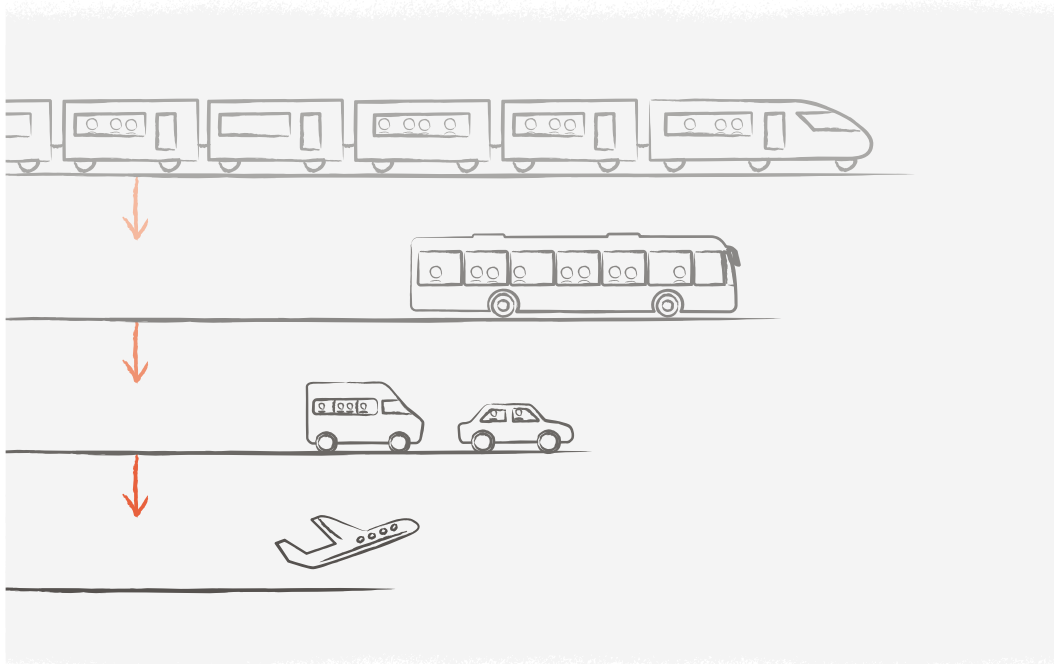
TRANSPORT

Depending on whether your event is for local or international participants, and on the choice of location, transport can seem a trivial issue or it can be a huge challenge. Either way, take transportation into account from the very start, because guess what? This will generate a huge part of the GHG emissions created during your event.

For a local event, even the success of the whole event can depend on how easily people can get to it, and thus how many people attend.

It is important to consider both the transportation back and forth from one's home, city and country to the event, and the local transportation from place of accommodation to the event venue. Make it as accessible as possible for everyone. And it's not only about the participants: think also about how the things you need for the event, like materials, infrastructure, equipment, or food, will be transported to the event location.

- Most means of transportation consume a large amount of energy and generate carbon emissions into the atmosphere. Being mindful of transportation for your event can have a very large impact on the carbon footprint of your event.
- Walking and cycling are the absolute best options. No emissions produced, plus you gain health benefits!



- In terms of carbon footprint, the order is quite simple: train is best, buses are next, shared cars and vans for places that are otherwise hard to reach are third. Airplanes are the worst polluters. (Airplanes have an extra global warming effect, because the vapour released high in the atmosphere have a greater global warming impact than CO₂ emission.) Depending on the geographic location, also ferries and ships might come onto the list as well. They can be less damaging to the environment than airplanes, but they, too, have large carbon footprints.
- Travelling by long-distance bus does have some advantages, but they are less environmental friendly than trains. Also, the ride cannot be as comfortable and there tends to be less space per person than on trains.
- Using public transportation is a networking opportunity because participants travel together in a common space, giving them opportunities to chat, discuss ideas, and other-

wise bond. Night trains have an advantage by sleeping on the train you can eliminate a hotel night.

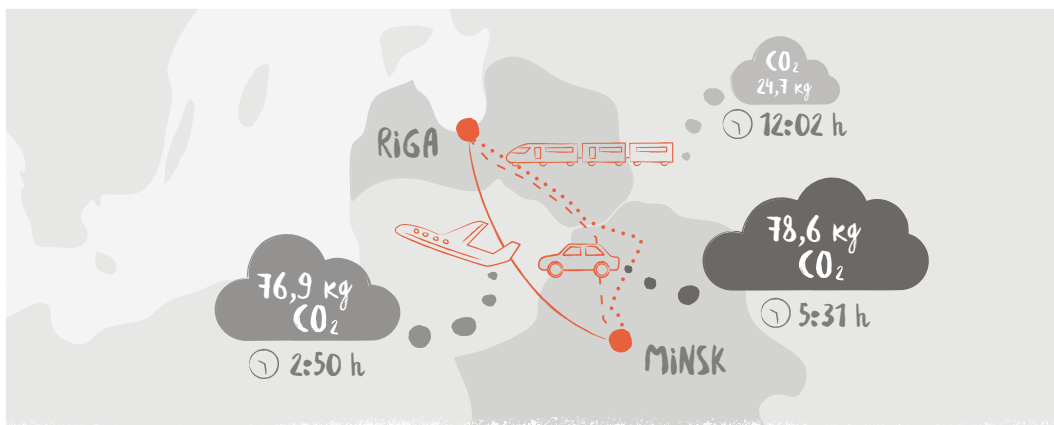
- Some train companies have reduced price offers for groups and/or for younger people. In some cases you can buy much cheaper tickets when buying the tickets well ahead of time. It is worth to look into these possibilities.

GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS: FACTS AND FIGURES

Make it clear to participants, in practical terms, that their choices matter and that they have measurable impacts on the environment.

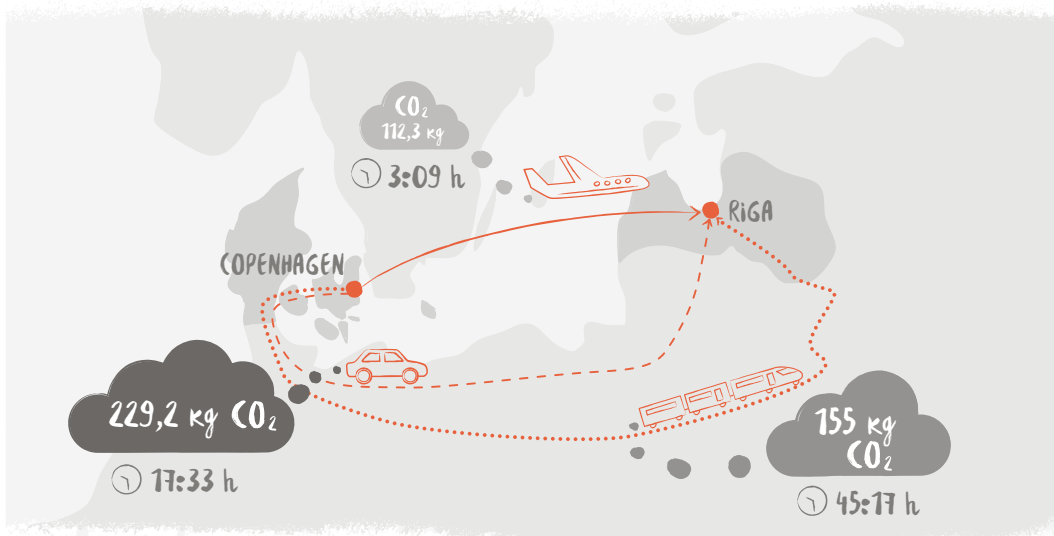
- To make your point and to recruit more people to the use of sustainable means of transportation, give some data for the length of the route or expected duration of the travel, comparing the emissions that would be created, for example, traveling the same distance by train, by car, by airplane or by train for the long-distance travels. Use existing on-line calculators, such as the German train (*Deutsche Bahn*) website www.bahn.de, that offer calculations, visual representations and in-depth analyses of routes across Europe.
- When comparing the emissions, take into consideration that airplanes emit much more pollutants at high altitudes, particularly vapour and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), which almost triple the climate impact of plane travel, beyond the emitted CO₂ levels. Even if the CO₂ levels for traveling a given distance by car and plane were the same, planes have a much more negative impact on the environment.

As an example, here is a graph from www.bahn.de for traveling from Minsk to Riga. It includes only CO₂, however, and does not show other GHGs:



The 24.7 kg of CO₂ emitted by the train is less than one third of CO₂ emissions of the car or airplane; that really is a selling point. Yes, the train journey takes 12 hours, but it is overnight, for most of it you can be sleeping and it eliminates a night in a hotel. It is a more adventurous, and definitely a more sustainable way, of traveling!

However, geography can be challenging, as we will see in this example of travel from Copenhagen to Riga:



The trip by car or train takes very long and spans the great distance of traveling around the Baltic Sea. Thus, from a CO₂-emissions standpoint, traveling by plane is the best option.

The best choice is not always evident. It's not always easy to get accurate and complete facts and figures. So, do a bit of research, rely on trusted sources, and present your own explanation for the facts that you gather. Be honest about the numbers and be clever about how to use them. In the case of getting from Copenhagen to Riga for an event, it is most likely and quite understandable that one would end up taking the plane, regardless of its impacts. You can make a point, then, of calculating how to offset the impact created.

CAN LIMITATIONS BE A GOOD THING?

Experience shows that limiting car traffic and, deprecating automobile travel to the event and encouraging public or specially organized transport – succeeds in persuading usual car drivers to change. Whether this would be beneficial specifically for your event highly depends on the context, the number of participants, the location, and other factors.

- If automobile parking is a 20-minute walk from the event, while organized transportation stops just a 5-minute walk away, some attendees may choose to switch.
- You can also reserve the most convenient parking spots for bicycles and alternative fuelled, hybrid, or electric cars, pushing the regular cars a bit further away. Parking fees can also be structured to provide incentives, e.g., a discount for those cars that arrive with all seats filled, or an increased price if one arrives by car alone.



BEFORE TRAVELLING...

- A good way to reduce transport impacts is to reduce the need for transport! Organize web-conferencing for speakers who then don't need to travel to the event; or even make the whole event accessible on-line through web-conferencing.
- Develop an internal policy for your organization that regulates how participants should choose their means of transportation from the available options (e.g. to not use airplanes for less than 600 km distance). Make sure to communicate this policy clearly ahead of time to your participants. Make travel reimbursement dependant on following the policy.



BICYCLE AWAY!

Bicycling is becoming increasingly popular all over the world. It can have added value by giving participants a vivid experience of the surrounding area and adds to their memories of your event. Make bicycling an easy and enjoyable choice!

- Partner with local bicycle vendors to arrange bicycle rentals.
- If there is a city bike system with short-term rentals and multiple pick-up and drop-off points in the city, make sure you explain to participants how it works and provide assistance in using the system.
- Provide bicycles that are easy for both women and men to use, including those who are not used to cycling in their everyday lives.
- Provide parking space and storage areas for bicycles where you can either lock them or have someone watch over them.

- Consider a maintenance facility with an air pump and a repair workshop.
- Meet at the event's site and provide a service to carry the luggage to the accommodation place by cargo bike or motor vehicle, while the participants can ride the bicycles.
- Consider making electric bikes available.

LOCAL TRAVEL (HOME/ACCOMMODATION TO THE VENUE)

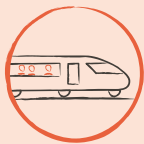


- Make sure the event/venue is easily accessible by public transportation and that a stop is nearby.
- Provide very clear, easily accessible directions to the venue. Include instructions regarding the best options and routes between the place of accommodation and the event by walking, biking, and by public transportation from main transportation hubs such as main train stations, coach stations, and landmarks of the city/town where you're holding your event. Prepare maps as relevant.
- For participants who must use public transportation to reach the event, include the cost of a public transportation pass in the overall costs or fee of attending the event.
- Promote taking the stairs instead of using an elevator. This will save energy, thus decreasing the impact on environment. The physical activity will help participants to stay energized and alert throughout the event. You could, for example, use plates by the floor numbers showing how many calories are being burnt by taking the stairs.



LONG-DISTANCE TRAVEL

- If there are no appropriate train or public bus services but a group of people are traveling to a distant event together, consider renting a van or a bus for the trip. That's still better than going by cars.
- What's bad about the buses, vans, and cars is the fossil fuels on which most of them run, with their dirty emissions. See if you can arrange and promote the use of electric vehicles or other innovative and environmentally friendly technologies.



ENCOURAGE TAKING TRAINS OR PUBLIC BUSES

- Set up a system with financial benefits for participants, e.g., reduce participation fees or grant an increased percentage of travel-cost reimbursement, for people who travel to the event by train or bus.
- If the budget allows, subsidize part of the travel expenses for those who use trains and buses instead of buying cheap airline flights. Long distance trains, buses, and ferries can be tiring, so think about offering an extra night of accommodation and extra meals for participants whose travel is very long, so that they can arrive well, capable of participating fully in the program.
- Emphasize the benefits of surface travel: the landscapes that you can enjoy, people you can meet with whom you can develop relationships with on the way, gaining a better sense of the of the daily lives of people. Travel by train is convenient. People can use their time to study and work, as there are desks, electric outlets, internet, and other amenities.

- Illustrate and communicate the difference in GHGs created, depending on the means of transportation participants choose. You can find some useful calculators on-line to make your point.
- Compare the accessibility of train or bus rides versus flights. Cheap airlines often travel very early in the morning or very late at night, and thus influence the well-being and energy levels of participants for the upcoming event. This can lead to increased costs and carbon emissions taking taxis to reach the airports. Add in the extra charges for luggage, and the seemingly cheaper flights may turn out to be more expensive than comfortable train rides would have been.

e.g.,
www.bahn.de

CARS: THE EVIL AND THE GOOD



If public transportation is not available, car-sharing is always better than individual driving. If planning ahead and using the car wisely, you will be able to cut back on emissions, too. Encourage car-sharing and consider setting some limitations for individual drivers. Here are a few tips:

- Technology matters. Since a big part of the cars' fault lies in the fossil fuels that they run on, consider promoting alternative fuelled vehicles (electric, hybrid, biofuel, natural gas) if such are available.
- If you like the technological solutions as a means for reducing the impact of cars on the environment, consider contacting companies that develop or own such vehicles. See whether they are interested in providing access in exchange for publicity through your event.
- Promote optimal use of the available space. Cooperate to drive a fully occupied car. This goes for organizers as well! Plan the transportation of materials and equipment that

you might need. Be clever to avoid unnecessary trips carrying materials from one place to the next or making emergency trips to shops to get something you forgot. This saves emissions as well as the cost of fuel.

- To promote car-sharing, dedicate a section of either the event's website or the organisation's website to a forum where participants can make arrangements for car-sharing. Drivers can announce departure times and locations and those who need a ride can contact them or sign up for a ride directly. *Facebook* groups and special websites such as *GoMore.dk* in Denmark work very well for this purpose. These services are easily found via internet search.
- If you encourage car-sharing as a means for getting to your event, make sure you also set out some ground rules for the process. Will drivers be collecting money for fuel from the passengers? Should there be some standard limit for it? What happens if a passenger decides not to go last-minute? You decide, but try to make this a pleasant experience for the participants and make it as easy as possible for the drivers.
- If you are organizing an open-participation event, you can also suggest that the potential participants use existing platforms to arrange their car-sharing. For example, *GoMore.dk* in Denmark has more than 300.000 members. In some other places, as is the case in Latvia, you can use certain forums on news websites or groups on *Facebook* (or *draugiem.lv*) to arrange car-sharing along popular routes.
- Work with nearby parking operators to allocate a certain number of parking stalls to participants who car-share to the event.

IF FLYING CAN'T BE AVOIDED: AIRPLANES



- Try to choose long haul/direct flights instead of multiple connected flights, since each take-off or landing is very energy-consuming and result in high level of emissions.
- Check for ways to buy carbon offsets. While only a few European airlines offer this opportunity themselves, you can channel the contributions to other organisations that promote and implement low-carbon approaches. However, you should be aware that offsets only cover a small portion of the real carbon footprint.
See www.atmosfair.de
- Try to compensate for some of the emissions with voluntary individual contributions/pledges of the participants, such as that after the event they'd be bicycling to work; using cloth bags instead of plastic ones; being vegetarian for a period of time. This can also help turn low eco-consciousness into the positive energy of being able to do something for the cause.
See more in Chapter "Activities"
- Set up a voluntary individual payment scheme for donating funds to the organizers specifically to implement offsetting actions like renting bicycles.

If you allow web-conferencing access for participants that cannot travel to the event physically, you will expand the reach of the event in a green way, without transport involved.





FOOD

Some of us are super-conscious about the food we cook and eat, while others are bluntly ignorant about food's properties and qualities as long as it keeps them going. In any case, we all know that food is important, because we simply can't live without it.

To meet people's needs to eat and drink, an enormous industry has developed that includes farming, pastures, animal farms, fisheries, vineyards, genetic engineering, chemical additives, processing, packaging, and shipping of foods. All of these activities take up land surface, use energy and large amounts of water. They also influence the biodiversity of ecosystems.

There is also trading, near and far, with fully stocked grocery stores and imported goods that have flown halfway around the globe. Many products carry hidden doses of chemical pesticides and preservatives within them. And then there's still Grandma's garden, where the world's tastiest tomatoes smell of pure sunlight. How should we make sense of this large and diverse universe of food? What can we do to reduce the impact of food production and consumption on the environment?

FOOD PRODUCTION

How food is produced makes a big difference. A large monoculture farm with automated processes runs very differently than a biological farm. The use of heavy machines, intensive irrigation, and the frequent use of pesticides have a direct impact on the environment. When buying food supplies and products, our money support the farming and production practices of companies whose products we buy!

There are certain types of foods that are inherently resource intensive. Meat production is a very carbon-intensive process. It

uses a lot of energy and water over a long period of time. Beef production requires almost 50 times more water than the same weight of vegetables.

About 1/3 of all fossil fuels produced go towards animal agriculture. The production of one calorie of animal protein requires more than 10 times the fossil-fuel input as required for a calorie of plant protein. This means that ten times the amount of CO₂ is emitted as well. A heavy meat-eater is sending 1,6 t CO₂ to the air annually, while for a vegetarian it is about 0,6 t CO₂. The GHG emission of producing 1 kg beef is 16 kg; for 1 kg of pig meat is 6,4 kg; for 1 kg of potatoes is 0,24 kg, and for 1 kg of wheat is 0,8 kg.



Did you know? In Denmark, 25 million pigs are produced annually, while there are 5 million people. The pigs are eating 1,5 million tons of soy, which is transported from Argentina. The pig meat is 3 to 4 times more than the Danes consume, so the excess meat is exported and transported to other countries and continents.

ANNUAL GHG EMISSION/PER PERSON FROM VARIOUS DIETS EXPRESSED AS THE EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF KM DRIVING A CAR



Food: NO meat and NO milk products (Vegan)



NO meat, but with milk products (Vegetarian)



Food: with meat and milk products:



Source: www.vegetarforening.dk

Consuming less meat and fewer milk products would reduce global warming. Animal and dairy production is responsible for about 14% of the GHG emissions. Some of the gasses come from producing the fodder animals eat. Fertilizers emit nitrous oxide (N₂O, or laughing gas), which is 300 times stronger as a GHG than CO₂. Transportation of fodder, animals, and meat has its own contributions. Last but not least, the cattle themselves produce methane gas, which is a 20 times stronger GHG than CO₂. Reducing the current population of 1.3 billion cattle in the world would have a substantial effect reducing the methane emission.

To support sustainable use of land and resources, choose to buy organic or eco-certified food products. You will be helping farmers care of the land in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way, keeping the soil and ground waters free of harmful chemicals. You will also enhance your own health by eating clean and nutritious products. In addition workers and their families on organic farms are better healthwise than those on industrial farms.



Euro leaf — organic logo of the European Union. At least 95% of their agricultural ingredients are organic. Bans most use of GMOs, and imposes rules for animal welfare.

More: www.euroleaf.org



Danish Organic logo - Ø - The Danish State-Controlled Organic Label — has a minimum requirement of meeting the EU label level. It is often stronger.

More: www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/english/Food/Organic_food



Rainforest Alliance certified — criteria designed to conserve wildlife, safeguard soils and waterways, protect workers and local communities, and improve livelihoods in order to achieve sustainability.

More: www.rainforest-alliance.org



Soil Association Organic Standard — certification established in 1973 in the UK. Currently it has stricter criteria than EU regulations, and covers a larger array of products.

More: www.soilassociation.org



Demeter's "biodynamic" certification requires preservation of biodiversity and of ecosystems, soil husbandry, livestock integration, prohibition of genetically engineered organisms, and viewing the farm as a living "holistic organism".

More: www.demeter.net www.biodynamisk.dk



The sign "natural product" (Belarus) is applied to products manufactured:

- from natural animal food raw materials and (or) from vegetable, or mineral origins;
- without the use of genetic engineering techniques;
- without the use of synthetic food additives.

More: www.bio.gosstandart.gov.by



Latvia's Eco-product — biologic agricultural products. Product manufacturers are regulated if any chemically synthesized ingredients or genetically modified organisms are present in the product.

More: www.ekoprodukti.lv

WHERE WAS THIS FOOD PRODUCED?

When we buy local produce, we get fresh and seasonal products, but also save on transportation of the goods, storage of them, and avoid a dose of chemicals that might be used to keep products fresh over extended transportation time as well.

Choosing local also means investing in the jobs and well-being of the people around you.

However, not everything can be grown close to where your event is taking place. Some popular products, such as coffee, ca-

cao beans, tea leaves, or bananas will end up traveling halfway around the globe. When buying such products, look out for the Fairtrade label.

Many companies are exploit farm workers who grow and harvest food products, by putting them in very harsh working conditions, with low pay, little or no workers' rights, all that for a larger profit to the companies. The Fairtrade movement and labelling oppose such exploitation of workforce and local people in the developing countries, as well as certifying that the food has been produced in an environmentally friendly way.



FLO Fairtrade — an alternative approach to conventional trade. It is based on a partnership between producers and consumers. Programs ensure a fair price for raw material farmers and, consequently, fair wages and decent working conditions for their workers. This allows them the opportunity to improve their lives and plan for their future. More: www.fairtrade.net



UTZ Certified — certifies only coffee, chocolate, tea, and rooibos tea. With regard to the sales amount of certified cocoa and coffee, this programme competes with "FLO Fairtrade", but "UTZ Certified" has not established any minimum prices and bonuses, apart from "FLO Fairtrade".

More: www.utz.org



IMO Fair For Life — works according to the same standards as "FLO Fairtrade"; however, this certificate can be awarded irrespective of the geographical location of the cooperative or production unit, national economic policy, or type of product.

More: www.fairforlife.org



The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) — an association of fair trade companies with its own system of guarantees. Various breeders, planters, manufacturers, distributors, exporters, importers, wholesalers, and other companies have registered with this organization.

More: www.wfto.com

ENERGY USE!

CARBON!

ON THE TABLE, AND NOT INTO TRASH BINS

Either you arrange to have a caterer or you plan and prepare snacks and meals yourself. Know that for participants the main concern is that the food is tasty and healthy and that they're getting the nutrients and calories needed to be feeling and performing well.

There are countless nutritious and very tasty vegetarian dishes. Be sure that your caterer or cook knows how to organize a healthy (and tasty!) vegetarian diet, or even work out the meal plan and recipes together with the cook/caterer!



Danes from **TEAM DECARBONIZE** participated in a week-long annual Sustainability Festival (Aarhus, Denmark) It was an extremely successful experience. Participants queued up for food at their stand. Team Decarbonize cooked and served vegan *Chili Sin Carne* for free. All they needed was a cooking stove, a 10-liter pot, kitchen devices for cooking, and biodegradable cups and spoons for serving, and the food itself. The preparation time for cooking takes approximately 1,5 hours, however the food can be made while people are coming by, and the visible process promoted people's curiosity.

More:

www.sustainablecities.eu/local-stories/aalborg-sustainability-festival

CHOOSING YOUR CATERER. FAVOR THOSE WHO...



- ☐ source the products from the surrounding areas and avoid supermarkets with imported goods.
- ☐ are open for discussions and cooperation, e.g., on sizes of portions, serving options, or recipes.
- ☐ have a good record of cooking vegetarian and/or vegan food.
- ☐ promote values such as healthy eating.
- ☐ care about materials they use for serving food.
- ☐ will not have to transport the food very far..

That's emissions again...

AVOID WASTING FOOD



- ☐ Work out the menu with the caterer, such way that it corresponds to participants' needs.
- ☐ Order or buy only as much food as is needed.
- ☐ Serve an 'open table' and not set portions, so that people can choose the amount and kind of food that they want and can eat.
- ☐ Make use of the food that hasn't been eaten at a meal: store it well and offer it at the next meal for those who'd like to have some, or incorporate it into the next meals if possible.
- ☐ Invite kitchen staff, organizers, or participants to take home the excess.
- ☐ If possible, compost any remaining food waste..
- ☐ During food preparation and cleaning up, have a container available for collecting food waste for composting, if such a possibility is available.



SERVING OF FOOD AND DRINKS

- Long-lasting and washable materials like ceramic and glass are the best. Ask participants to mark their cups.
- Avoid using disposable dishes. If it can't be done, look for biodegradable materials (no plastic!).
- Make carafes or drinking water tanks available and avoid using plastic bottles, especially of small size.
- Encourage participants to bring their own reusable drinking bottles for water, especially for multiple-day events.
- Let the participants serve themselves.
- For eating outdoors, consider asking participants to take their own cups, bowls and cutlery, and try to also provide them with the means to wash these items right afterwards.
- Water supply outdoors: for an on-site event, provide a tank of tap water where people can fill up their water bottles.
- If you are traveling for some part of your event, make sure that enough drinking water is available.
- If you are doing a day-trip, provide spill-proof boxes for food packaging. Avoid plastic bags and unnecessary paper wraps.



PUT INTO PRACTICE

- Optimize transportation and storage of food to save resources.
- When large quantities are needed, buy products in bulk or in large containers.
- Avoid excess packaging.

- Buy less processed food and consider buying food directly from the producers.
- Buy local and seasonal produce, choosing organic, eco-certified and Fairtrade products.
- Avoid GMOs (genetically modified organisms).
- Eat less meat, or even none at all. Animal farming and meat production is very energy- and water-intensive.
 - Have meat-free days at the event.
 - Provide tasty vegetarian or vegan food.
- Plan the menu or make sure it's planned well planned.
- Consider involving participants in preparing food, or in choosing the necessary supplies, bringing their attention to the above-mentioned issues.
- Consider the water footprint of the selected food products.

A stylized illustration of a notepad with a pencil, paper clips, and a pushpin. The notepad is the central focus, with a pencil at the bottom and several paper clips around it. The background is a light gray with a subtle pattern of dots.

MATERIALS, SUPPLIES AND SERVICES

You will be choosing to use diverse materials, cleaning supplies, promotion and merchandise materials, consumables, decors, etc. for your event. The environmental impacts of these choices do matter.

It is impossible to make an event without equipment and supplies. The best choice is to reduce the amount of materials used during the event altogether, but you'll still need something; and it's important to consider smart and green choice of supplies and services for those somethings. Avoid disposable items.

TIPS FOR GREENER PROCUREMENT

The larger the event, the more materials and supplies are required and the greater the potential for negative environmental impacts. Consumption of different materials and its eventual disposal has a massive effect on carbon emissions and climate change. Therefore, reducing the impact of your event's purchasing should definitely be on the list of your to-do list. Choices that reduce the amount of GHGs generated and waste produced will save you money!

Going local for the sake of global good remains the right strategy. By choosing local suppliers you will not only minimize impact of needed transportation, but also support local economy, namely working places and social guarantees for the people around your venue.

Before buying durable equipment and materials, consider the equipment's life cycle, that is, all aspects of the product including design, production, operation, maintenance, and disposal. Think about what materials have been used to produce it and what will happen with them at the end of the life cycle of the product. The two keywords here are 'biodegradable' and 'recyclable' materials. These terms apply to both product components and packaging materials. When materials that are not biodegradable get put in a landfill, the air, moisture, climate, and soil cannot break them down naturally to be dissolved with the surrounding land. Meanwhile, natural waste and biodegradable products will break down after some time following disposal.

The concept "cradle to cradle" addresses the need to find sustainable solutions where materials could be reused without losing their main properties and losing their value. Check the book "Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things".

Check the next chapter Waste for more detail on this.

THE 4 MAGIC R'S:

① REFUSE, ② REDUCE, ③ REUSE, ④ RECYCLE

Just as you can refuse to take plastic shopping bags at the check-out of a grocery store and always carry with you a reusable cloth bag instead, you can refuse to use certain types of materials, supplies, and services. Finding alternatives has probably never been as easy as now.



REFUSE

By refusing "business as usual" you open a path to new scenarios and new habits to be formed. For example, instead of buying a piece of equipment like a projector, you can borrow one or agree to share one among a number of organisations. Or you can simply refuse to buy any goods that have been wrapped in excess plastic packaging. Remember that your purchase means casting a vote in support of a company's practices.

REDUCE



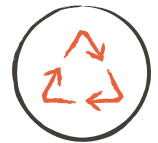
Reducing the need for materials at your event comes next. Decide which items are vital and which are less essential. Then challenge yourself not to buy a portion of the list that you consider non-essential! When you buy an item, double-check that the material has the needed properties for which it's intended use. Ask questions and seek advice from vendors. That way, you will avoid buying things that are left unused.

REUSE



Reusing materials means to use reconditioned or recycled equipment and materials whenever possible and appropriate. Think ahead about the design and choice of materials that you are buying, also considering what will happen with each item after the event. Example: unless there is a special need for an event or project-specific banner design, keep to generic banners, posters, or signs that could be reused for other events or for the regular work of the organisation.

RECYCLE



Finally, let it go to ashes and then rise from them like a phoenix. Yes, we're talking about recycling or the rebirth of materials into new forms of materials or products. Participate in recycling. Separate waste into different categories. Ensure that it reaches the correct collection channels. Choose materials and supplies that contain recycled materials and that can be recycled themselves at the end of their life-cycles.

ECOLABELS

Ecolabels are based on life-cycle considerations, when all aspects of the “life” of a product, from design, through production, operation, and maintenance, up to disposal, are taken into consideration. The labels can be awarded to each specific product after rigorous checking that they fulfill the criteria of necessary certification.



Be cautious about products that pretend to be eco, but are not certified!

There are products that have the terms “eco” or “bio” or “natural” in their product title or on their labels, but show no evidence that the product is environmentally friendly. In Latvia, the usage of the term “eco” for supplies is not regulated, therefore choose products with only internationally recognized ecolabels. These are the most common ones:



The EU Ecolabel is the official eco-certification of the European Union. Ecolabel is awarded to textiles, floorings, office paper, etc. More: www.ecolabel.eu; www.ecolabel.dk



The Nordic Ecolabel or Nordic swan (Svanemærket) is the official sustainability ecolabel for the Nordic countries, introduced by the Nordic Council of Ministers. This is awarded to cleaning agents, paper products, batteries, paints, and varnishes. More: www.nordic-ecolabel.org



The Blue Angel is an environmental label organised by the federal government of Germany for the protection of people and the environment. The Blue Angel is awarded to paper products, paints, varnishes, and finishing materials. More: www.blauer-engel.de



ICEA, Environmental and Ethical Certification Institute, certifications cover food (organic food production and organic aquaculture) and non-food products (detergents, textile, furnishing, materials for eco-building, sustainable management of green areas).

More: www.icea.info

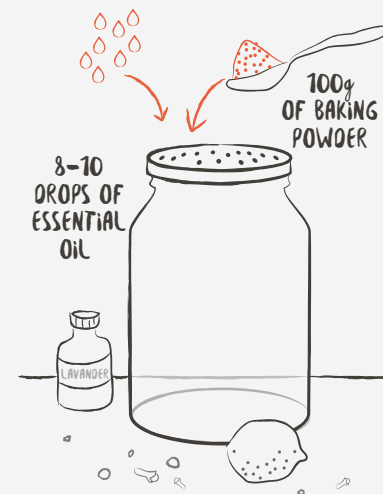


The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international certification for sustainable forestry. FSC Certification meant to recognize sustainable forest-management practices.

More: www.us.fsc.org/en-us

More eco-labels:
www.ecolabelindex.com

TEAM DECARBONIZE is enthusiastic about using self-made household supplies. Some members even prepare and use their own cosmetics products. The air freshener in their office is a glass jar that is covered with a cap perforated by small holes. It holds a mixture of about 100 g of baking powder and 8-10 drops of essential oil (lavender at the moment, but it can be anything you choose). Instead of spraying something toxic in the air, you just need to give the jar a shake for the scent to fill the room. No one remembers where they first found the recipe for it. The internet holds plenty of suggestions for DIY products. Search, choose, and try some out! You'll be surprised how far you can go just with baking soda and citric acid.





TIPS FOR GREENER PROCUREMENT: SUPPLIERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Use local producers and suppliers as much as possible.
- Choose suppliers and service providers whose raw materials were produced with less harm to the environment and/or were fairly traded.
- When choosing the suppliers, take into account the companies' environmental and social initiatives.
- Buy items produced by organizations that look after their workers well, including a fair price paid to raw-material providers.
- Plan travel routes for collecting materials to minimize the number and lengths of trips. This will reduce your transport costs as well as your CO₂ emissions.



CHOICE OF PRODUCTS

- Avoid buying supplies that you won't use. Be very clear about the necessary properties of materials that you seek.
- Ask questions and seek advice from vendors.
- Repair and reuse items if it is possible, rather than discarding and replacing them.
- If DIY won't do, seek reconditioned or recycled equipment and materials, as long as they will work for your purposes.
- Choose supplies and equipment that contain recycled materials and that can be recycled themselves at the end of their life-cycles.

- Choose biodegradable products and/or biodegradable packaging.
- Choose products with less packaging. Individually wrapped items create extra waste. If you can buy in bulk, you often can reduce packaging and save money.
- Think twice about whether you really need to give presents to participants and partners. If you do, the gifts should be useful, long-lasting, and environment-friendly.

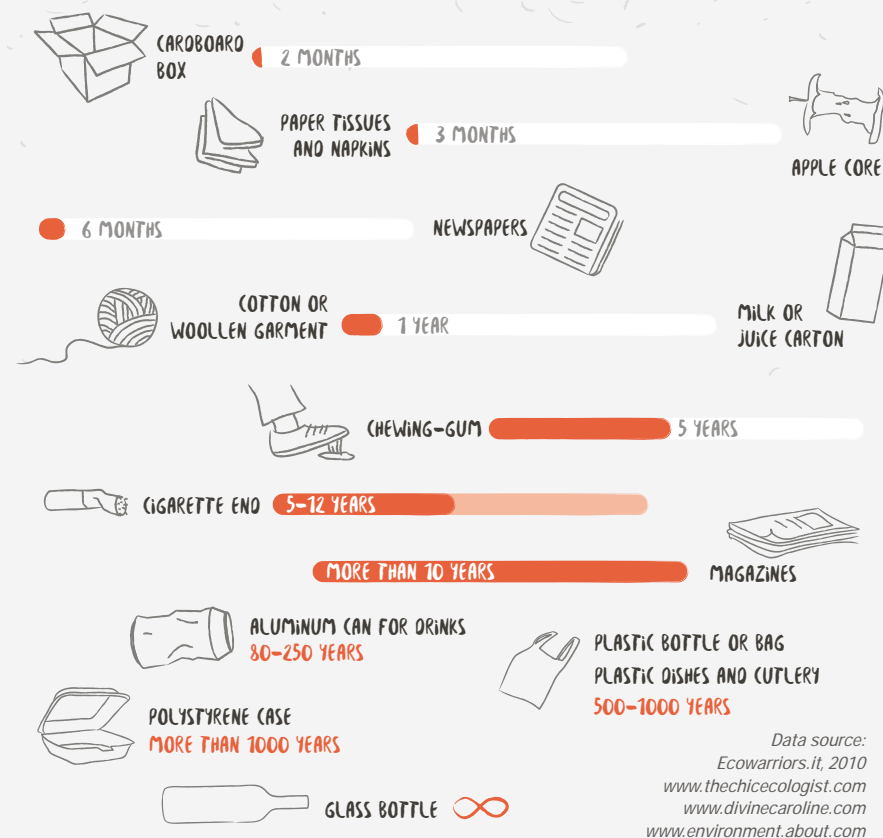
HOUSEHOLD SUPPLIES AND CLEANING



- When buying detergents and cleaning products for the kitchen, bathroom, or general cleaning, choose environmentally benign eco-labelled products.
- The same goes for body-washing products such as soaps and shampoos.
- Choose natural and reusable sponges, mops, rags, and other accessories.
- Avoid using paper towels. Use old t-shirts or other worn-down clothes as rags instead.
- If you have to use paper towels or napkins, choose recycled, unbleached paper. The same applies to toilet paper.
- Skip air-freshener sprays and scent the air naturally by boiling herbs such as cinnamon or cloves.
- Look into DIY recipes for cleaning products made from natural ingredients.



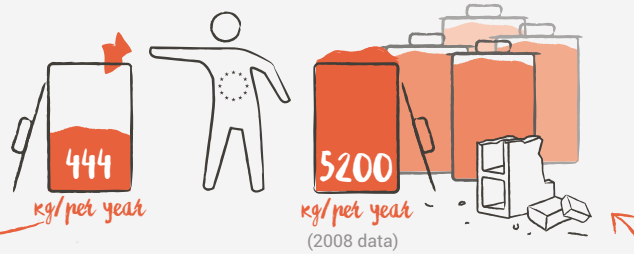
AVERAGE NATURAL DEGRADATION TIME OF BURIED/LANDFILLED WASTE:



Many landfills are designed to be sealed, which blocks the breakdown of the buried wastes. This step is taken to contain toxic seepage, but also, by limiting decay, it prevents much of what otherwise would be collectively significant emissions of methane and of CO₂. People generate an incredible amount of waste, from packaging, food scraps, clothing, household chemicals, used paper, and a wide array of other materials. Toxins and GHGs are released into the environment by the disposal of waste in landfills or via incineration (except in Belarus and Latvia). These are a nightmare for the natural environment and pose

WASTE

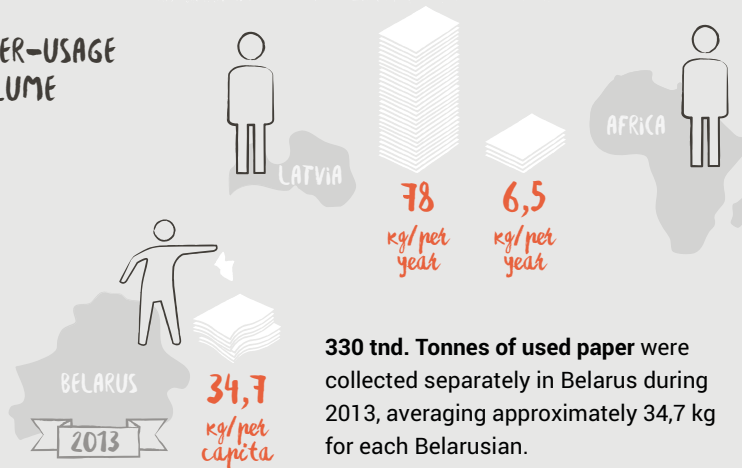
This figure is expected to increase.



The largest waste streams in Europe, however, originate from construction, demolition, mining, and quarrying, along with manufacturing activities.

European Environment Agency, 2015

PAPER-USAGE VOLUME



RECYCLING

Recycling Aluminum requires 95% less energy than making it from scratch. The figure is 70% for plastics and 40% for paper.

Economist



serious health risks for humans. Yet, the rate at which people produce waste keeps growing.

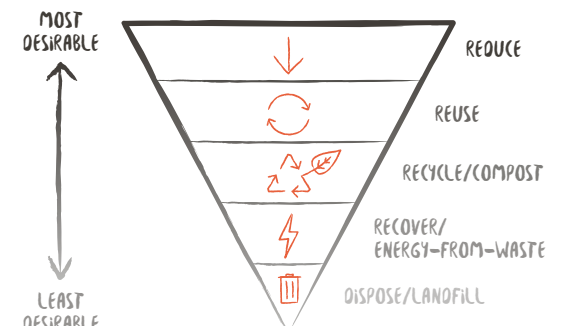
Throughout the planning and implementation of your event, the organizers and participants will all be producing waste. Try to reduce the amount of waste produced, and seek the best options for disposal of non-recyclable materials.

WASTE REDUCTION AND THE ZERO-WASTE CONCEPT

The best way to deal with waste would be not to create any. You can use what you have or make your own rather than buying new materials. Refuse packaging and the use of plastic bags whenever possible. Lead by example and make it the new norm.

Waste is undoubtedly a problem in the production and packaging industries. Items are produced without consideration of their life-cycles. Products of use-and-throw-away thinking can be difficult or impossible to reuse. Component materials are mixed together, making them impossible to recycle. An excessive amount of materials is being used for packaging and marketing purposes, for instance, plastic and gift wraps, along with other materials wasted on systems of single-use packaging. Several approaches are used to solve the above-mentioned problems, such as cradle-to-cradle reuse.

The waste-management hierarchy pyramid describes a systematic approach for efficient use of resources and materials to keep waste to a minimum. Minimize waste in every stage of planning, holding, and following up on your event by following these steps:



WASTE SEPARATION FOR REUSE/RECYCLING

The most common types of waste being collected separately are paper, glass, plastic, metal, and “general waste” (everything else).

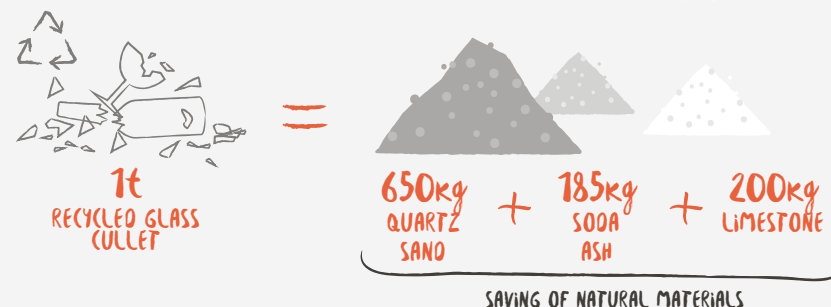
Be aware of national/regional practices in terms of the types of packaging or other waste that are collected in each of the categories. For example, window glass and mirrors should not be put into separation containers, because they can't be recycled with packaging-glass waste (jars, bottles).

While it is easy to separate paper and glass, plastics require more effort. Multiple types of plastic are used in manufacturing, and they can be hard to take a part. Many are marked with a category number.

Check the relevant information on the national, regional, or municipal web site of the government or the responsible waste-management company. For example, when it comes to plastics, Latvia allows only PET bottles and polyethylene bags (HDPE 2, LDPE 4) to be recycled. In Belarus, the main plastic wastes that may be recycled are PET bottles, polyethylene bags, packaging from shampoo and cosmetics, and some others.



In most countries, in addition to the recycling system, there is also a deposit system for plastic and glass bottles as well as for aluminum cans from soda-water and beer. A deposit system means that part of the purchase price that you pay is for the packaging. The packaging can be returned later to the same shop and you will get that portion of your money back.



TEAM DECARBONIZE has been struggling to introduce waste separation at their events. Their most common problem has been that participants throw mixed items in the provided separation bins so that the waste remains unsorted.

One measure that has helped is putting clear labels and instructions on or close to the bins. Another tip is to make sure that there is a bin labelled 'any other trash' for items that don't fit into any of the waste-separation categories.

Another tip from TEAM DECARBONIZE:

A great way of dealing with small items or waste created by activities is to turn the clean-up into a team-building activity or an energizer. Split the participants into a few teams and have them compete to collect the largest amount of, e.g., the confetti sprinkled around during the last activity.

Plan the end of a creative workshop to be when all teams return their used materials to the designated spot, avoiding glue spills, damaged or left-behind materials, and the throwing away of still-usable materials, refillable containers, etc.





During the Northside Festival in 2014 (Aarhus, Denmark), 53% of 90 t waste were collected separately, including food, metal, wood, and glass. The organisers implemented their own drinking-cup deposit system. Activists designated as “Trash Talkers” walked around motivating participants and explaining how to separate waste.

Danes from **TEAM DECARBONIZE** volunteered in the Festival and created a “comfort zone” to give the hard-manual-labor volunteers a place to rest. These workers also received a pep-talk on why their tasks of picking up trash, sorting, etc., actually are extremely significant steps toward achieving sustainability.

More: <http://2015.northside.dk/>

REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF WASTE



- Reduce the amount of materials used, as well as the use of energy, water, heating, and chemicals.
- Reuse items by borrowing, repairing, buying second-hand goods, swapping/exchanging, or combining the remains of materials from previous events.
- Recycle/compost materials that you collected for those purposes. Do this either through national/regional waste management systems or by recycling or upcycling them yourself. Composting, too, is a major recycling mechanism!
- Recover materials or use for Energy-from-Waste. If there is a possibility for the waste produced to go into recovery or energy production processes (e.g. to go to a biomass energy plant) make sure you make use of it!

ORGANIZE WASTE SEPARATION



- Save space: ask people (and show them how) to flatten, for example, their plastic bottles.
- Make sure that you have a system in place for transporting waste to collection points. If the venue separates its waste, negotiate for assurance that the carriers will pick up the extra amount of waste from your event. If the venue won't help, make other arrangements to collect and store waste and then to get it to a collection point.
- Identify the types of waste that will be generated during the event and estimate expected quantities.
- Take account of the number of participants and the length of your event in your calculations.

- Make sure to provide enough trash containers, bins, and bags.
- Place them strategically, considering what types of waste will be created in different parts of the venue and considering the movement of participants across the venue.
- Provide clear marking of the bins for different types of waste.
- Add instructions for what can go in each of the different bins.
- Inform participants about the waste-separation system.
- Move the sorted waste to collection points or containers.



EXTRA CREDIT: COMPOSTING

In some countries, you may find these practices:

- Some cities collect organic waste separately from households and from industries in colour-coded bags for use at biogas plants.
- In some country sides and at private houses in cities, some residents compost kitchen and garden wastes, applying the resulting compost as manure to improve their garden soil. Some municipalities provide composting tanks for this purpose.
- One way to get high-quality compost is to use vermicomposting. Vermicompost is the product of composting using various worms, and is one of the most helpful soil amendments for any garden. Vermicomposting is an excellent technique for recycling food waste in an apartment as well as organic waste in a residential yard. One benefit of ver-

micomposting is that the compost needs no mixing or turning.

If the event is organized in a rural area, you might be able to collect food waste separately. Look into the option of making your own compost.

About compost: <https://youtu.be/w00ZuUHYlnk>
How To Build a Compost Bin: <https://youtu.be/UmacDroscrg>
<https://youtu.be/vXT5Hfl-4TQ>



LEAVE NO TRACE

If your event or a part of it is taking place outside, there is just one very simple rule: Retrieve all of your trash from the natural surroundings and place it in appropriate waste containers. All of it. Full stop.

- If you are organizing a whole event in the outdoors, please do familiarize yourself with "Leave No Trace" principles.
- Don't burn plastic items in open fire! The temperature of the fire is not high enough to render plastics into ash. You can easily see black smoke coming from a fire in which plastic are burning. This smoke contains dangerous substances like dioxins. Any residues left from such a fire are toxic.
- The one exception to the rule of retrieval is biological wastes such as apple cores, cucumber peels, etc. If you are sure that this type of waste is biodegradable, you can simply bury it in the ground, in sand, or somewhere in water.
- Cigarette-filter collection can be done by the smokers in palm-sized, portable ashtrays.



ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

As previous chapters have shown, there are many ways to make your events friendlier to the environment. In addition to all the practical arrangements, one core component has yet to be discussed here: the content of the event.

For instance, you might make sustainable lifestyle the main topic of a week-long camp, or you might hold a 20-minute session on low-carbon solutions during a day-long event. Obviously, in these cases, the methodology used and the depth to which you can delve into the issue will differ. Below, we suggest various possible activities. You're invited to pick and combine any that fit your interests, the type of event, the group of participants, and the general context.

CREATIVE RECYCLING/UPCYCLING WORKSHOPS

These workshops are a way to educate people about environment and clever use of resources, to think about how to up-cycle the materials that otherwise would have gone to waste, to use our creativity, and to have fun! You can find plenty of instructions and videos for other materials, too. Just make sure you try them out ahead of the event to get a sense of how it will go.

DEMONSTRATIONAL ACTIVITIES

These activities serve to provide experience with some low-carbon ideas and technical solutions in a very hands-on way. Participants see the solutions, touch them, use them, or even construct them. Most of them are best to do outdoors and in good weather, but you can try to adapt them to different settings, too.

TRANSPORT AND ENERGY: GENERATING ELECTRICITY WITH A BICYCLE



This demonstration would involve a standing bicycle connected to an electric panel in front of it that shows how much energy the rider produces in a digital display. In addition, the display has connected electric bulbs that light up with the power generated. You can also put two bikes next to each other and people can compete. At the UN Climate Conference in Paris in December, 2015, you could cycle and, in the same time, charge your mobile phone, or enable an electric juicer to produce a juice drink for you. Look for such installations among environmental organizations and at exhibitions on energy and environment. See whether you can borrow one for your event.

RENEWABLE ENERGY: DEMO SOLAR HEAT COLLECTOR PANEL



Place a solar-heat collection panel to heat water for showers, or just to show how it works. Such an installation increases the awareness that solar-heat collectors produce hot water. It is a simple technology that nonetheless informs and intrigues. It also helps participants to understand the difference between solar panels that produce electricity and those that heat water.

Solar heat collectors are available for purchase in most countries, so if you can't borrow one from an organization, this could be a good investment to make. In Central and Eastern Eu-

YOU COULD MAKE:



The best thing about it is that you really can create durable and useful things that you can use for a long time, and they will carry with them the story of your event.

How about staging a raft race with rafts built of empty PET bottles or a load of tetra-packs?

LEARNING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LOW-CARBON SOLUTIONS

It doesn't have to be a lecture. You can give participants some fact sheets and data and use creative media such as music, paints, or theatre to prepare a song, a painting, a sketch. Think about whether you know people who might have an inspiring story to share, an explanation to help illuminate in greater depth some of the topics that we tackle here, or a song to sing about environmental awareness. Use personal stories, and benefit from what your team-mates or even the participants know. You might learn about, e.g., a vegetarian life-style, home-made cosmetics, someone working in an environmental NGO, an activist, a policy-maker, a green-business representative, and so on.

rope, NGOs have held several solar-heating Do-It-Yourself workshops with great success.



RENEWABLE ENERGY: DEMO SOLAR-CELL PANEL

Put in place a solar-cell panel that can charge the mobile phones or battery packs of the participants. Solar cells work without direct sunlight, too, so this is a demonstration that you can carry out almost all year round. As with the solar heat collector, more and more NGOs /energy-advisor centers exhibit such an installation. It is also practical to use, as there tend to be quite a lot of mobile phones. Appoint a person to attend the charging station, to collect and give back the phones, to explain the technology, and to talk about other renewable energies.



RENEWABLE ENERGY: DEMO SOLAR BOX COOKER

There is great demonstration value in a *solar box cooker*, which can cook rice, beans, or coffee. Making food is always fun, and solar cookers actually do not need attention. The event is finished and the coffee /food is ready... The box can be bought or made during a workshop. There are also solar-cooking books. Do consider, though, that you likely will need steady sunshine for the demonstration to be successful.

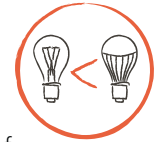
More: www.solarcookers.org



RENEWABLE ENERGY : BUILD-IT-YOURSELF WORKSHOPS

Build moving models rotated by a motor, powered with a solar cell. Build small models from different materials (like waste) combined with a small solar-cell-driven motor. The models would turn around when the sun is shining on them. You need the solar cell, motor, some waste material, and to let the fantasy fly. At the end of the workshop, hold a little exhibition. You can make it more fun with a little evaluation by the participants, where people can vote to choose the nicest, smartest, etc.

ENERGY: DEMO WITH MEASUREMENTS



- Comparing Energy Bulbs and LEDs: Take various types of light bulbs and measure how much energy each uses. You will need light bulbs connected to electricity, as well as electricity-measuring equipment.
- Measuring Electricity Consumption of Equipment: Take different appliances and measure how much electricity they use. If there is an opportunity, it is also a very effective visual to boil some water in an open and closed pot. This can be done along with measuring the use of electricity or gas.

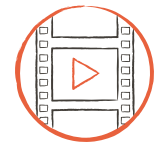
CALCULATING CARBON FOOTPRINTS



There are several calculation programs online with which carbon footprints can be calculated. Some allow custom entries, which you can use to see how you can be better than an "average" event organizer. The web sites are:

- <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/>
- www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx
- www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/

SHOWING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTARY FILMS IN THE EVENINGS



Showing films in the evenings of a conference or seminar is a good way to engage people. Real success can be achieved with a short introduction and organising discussion after the film.

Films on Energy and Climate:

- The Age of Stupid (2009), Film and Campaign
More: www.spannerfilms.net/films/ageofstupid and www.notstupid.org.
- An Inconvenient Truth (2006)
More: www.takepart.com/an-inconvenient-truth

- **The Fourth Revolution: Energy (2010)**
More: www.4-revolution.de/
- **This Change Everything (2015)**
More: www.thischangeseverything.org/

Films on Resources:

- **The Light Bulb Conspiracy (2010) - The Planned Obsolescence.** More: www.videoproject.com/libuco.html
- **The Last Call - Film on the "Limits to Growth" (2014) - The untold reasons of the global crisis.**
More: www.lastcallthefilm.org

Films on Plastic Pollution:

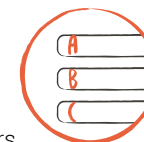
- **Bag It** More: www.bagitmovie.com/ ;
- **Tapped** More: www.tappedthemovie.com/
- **Plastic Shores** More: www.plasticshoresfilm.com/
- **Plastic Planet** More: <https://youtu.be/JWE75CTVIEI>
- **Plastic Oceans** More: www.plasticoceans.net



GREEN AWARD CEREMONY

- Give some form of recognition to people who rode bicycles throughout the event, or who covered the largest distance, by setting up a little competition. Mention the winners at the "goodbye" party and give each a little present, which could be connected to the use of a bicycle, like a helmet or a safety light. It is always nice to inspire participants to continue low-carbon practices such as bicycling after the event.
- You can give some recognition to those who have arrived at your event using car-sharing, in the form of, e.g., an inspiring and funny sticker testifying that they use car-sharing and promoting this practice to the people around them. Be sure to evaluate the need for this, though, and check for a second opinion on whether the stickers are designed well and/or have a catchy message so that people would actually use them instead of throwing them away.

- Think about creative ways to promote walking and cycling. Consider organizing a photo-orienteeering task for the purpose of reaching the venue from the place of accommodation or from nearby landmarks to make the journey more exciting and invite participants to explore the surroundings.



QUESTIONNAIRE COMPETITION

Compose about a dozen questions with multiple answers. Some questions can be just funny, which makes people laugh but, at the same time, clarifies simple concepts. Discuss the answers at the end to help participants learn. Offer a symbolic prize for the winner.

More: www.inforse.org/europe/Quiz11.htm

SOME OF THE MORE COMICAL QUESTION-AND-ANSWER CHOICES:

What is a Solar PV Cell?

- ☐ A A sunny cell in a Buddhist Monastery
- ☐ B A unit that produces heat from the sun
- ☐ C A unit that produces electricity from the sun

What can we do with the CO₂ from a solar collector or a wind turbine?

- ☐ A The CO₂ can be stored in an underground storage
- ☐ B Solar and wind energy use do not produce CO₂
- ☐ C The CO₂ can be evaporated

What does LED stands for?

- ☐ A Lovely Easy Solutions
- ☐ B Light Emitting Diode
- ☐ C Low Emission Direction



FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES #AFTER THE EVENT

It seems likely that by now you are prepared enough to do something on your own. Find a place to host an event, gather your friends and associates, collect the best ideas for the event, and choose! Soup-kitchen event, eco-weekend for children, art festival, it may be anything you want!

Don't forget to make a list of responsibilities. It makes the process easier. Here are some tips on continuing to engage your participants even after the main event is done:

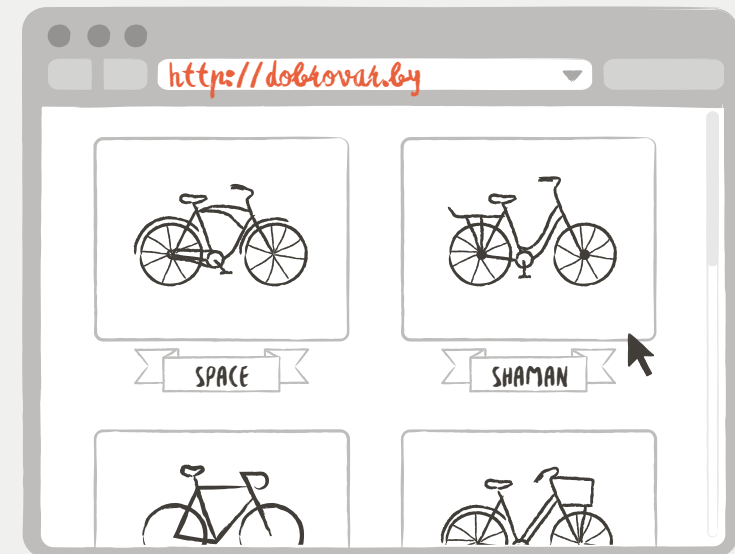
- Set up an eco-post office at your event. During the event, participants may write anything they want on a postcard and send it for free within a country. Before the event, you can print postcards with any information that you'd like to share with people.
- Do not underestimate media resources. Before the event, make sure that you've created a hashtag (#) on social networks. It can help you to spread information about your event and make the impact bigger!
- If your event takes place in public venues, you can put a map on the wall and encourage participants to write their thoughts on what they'd like to see changed in the venue. After the event ends, you could give that information to the hosts and help them to understand how their place could be improved.

- You also can post on a wall a list on which all participants and guests can contribute useful links and resources. Then, post those links on your social network group!
- You can encourage participants to write letters to themselves! Let's call them "letters to the future". They can set a goal, or imagine what they'd like to achieve within a year (or shorter period). Collect all the addresses, and after an agreed interval, send all the letters to their owners.
- Use information from these guidelines in your project. You can also use it on ...yourself! Set a challenge for yourself, e.g., one meatless week, or a month on the bike. Make sure that you promise it publicly, to family, to friends, even on your social-network account; that will make it much more difficult not to keep your promise!
- Raise awareness among the people around you. Your event can be a genuine inspiration for other people, so make it visible. Share information via Internet and social networks. Invite mass media and potential stakeholders.



TEAM DECARBONIZE:

In June, 2015, as a follow-up activity after School for Environmental Activists, 5 guys from Minsk launched a free bike-sharing system. For 6 months, they collected old bikes. No one expected such a success; they've received more than 60 old bikes, while asking only for 25! Each bike has its own name and history such as Shaman, Space, and Dragon's Breath. Anyone over 18 years old can register at the web site and have access to a booking system for 25 bikes. It is recommended to use a bike for no more than 12 hours; otherwise, a system administrator calls and reminds the user to return the bike. The system was created on a volunteer basis, and it's free.





When planning and implementing your event, you might be in touch with many stakeholders or groups of people. These may include sponsors, partners, suppliers, funders, your team of organizers, and the event participants.

In order to create a sustainable event, you will need to engage with all of these groups, at least to some extent. Communication is really crucial to your success.

As you reach out to these various interests, your interactions with them can yield an additional, very important benefit. You may find yourself educating your event's stakeholders, participants, and maybe the wider public on issues around sustainability and low-carbon solutions, thus promoting these approaches and practices.

WHY IS COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

The process of event communication is often associated with large blocks of materials and papers. These may include time sheets, printouts of presentations, schedules, maps, etc.; booklets about the event, accommodation place, camp spot, partner organisations, etc.; banners, logos, or decorations. There may be, as well, materials and leaflets used before the event to advertise it or to register for the event. Event souvenirs as well as participant kits with their pens, paper blocks, and t-shirts are all part of the event's communication. Being clever about com-

munication and reducing possibly unnecessary materials will make your event greener as well as reduce costs.

STORYTELLING

It is important to spread the information about your events' values and sustainable activities. Good stories inspire and help achieve impacts far beyond the group of event participants.

THE PRACTICALITIES

Whenever possible, consider using online systems for event communication, for registration processes, and for communication during the event, if participants will have access to online communication. This will reduce the amount of paper and ink used for printouts.

Communication is not only what we say, it is also, and maybe even more so, what we do. Events can be a great opportunity to demonstrate, not just to talk about, low-carbon solutions.

THE CONTENT

Remember that all of your communication activities (e.g., registration and communication with participants before the event, the materials that participants receive, etc.) have the potential to reduce negative impacts of the event and to increase awareness-raising by stakeholders.

Promote the event as environmentally sustainable. When organizing an event, explain to each audience the environmental considerations applying to every step of the process. Draw attention to them, because some concepts could be worth explaining to others even if they seem self-explanatory to you. Therefore, ensure that the information on your sustainability efforts is provided electronically prior to and after each meeting.

THE MEANS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Communicate actively on social networks. You also can involve the participants and stakeholders in the communication about your event, e.g., by "tagging" photos with participants. Before you do, however, you should ask each individual's permission to publish and tag them. You can encourage participants to communicate in social networks, e.g., by publishing some pictures that communicate your green ideas, etc.

When communicating on social networks and microblogs, remember to use hashtags (#). Hashtags are indexing markers with labels that facilitate cataloguing and searching for specific information or content. Choose a hashtag for your event that is, e.g., linked to the title of your event, and use it every time you communicate on social networks.

Before you can communicate on social networks, you need to have an account on each of them. You can compose a specific profile of your event for social networks, but it is more meaningful to communicate from an existing account that already has followers.

When planning your communications for use on social networks, choose a few networks on which you can sustain your activity. Don't try to be everywhere and to communicate on all social networks; it will take up too much of your effort and time. It is better to choose strategically, e.g., networks most favored by your target audience or on which you or your organization already have an account and followers.

If you choose to communicate your event in mass media, remember to talk not only to the national level, but also with regional media. Usually, the latter are interested in local events.

THIS IS IT.
NOW IT'S UP TO YOU AND ALL OF US
TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

SELF-EVALUATION FORM

Which were the chosen priority areas for decreasing our event's impact on the climate?

Which practices or tips worked for us?

Which practices or tips did not work out too well?

What did we learn from trying to apply the climate-friendly practices that we chose?

What can I suggest or recommend to a team that would be organizing a similar event?

What seemed to be the most efficient measure from among those that we tried, in terms of decreasing the overall carbon emissions/climate impact of our event? (If you have made calculations, measurements, or comparisons, please list relevant information here).

How much might we improve? What % of carbon-footprint reduction should I challenge our team or the next team of organizers to attain with the next event?

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 - www.slack.com
 - www.hasana.com
 - www.dropbox.com

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2. Eco-label „Green Certificate“ www.celotajs.lv

3. Eco-label „Green Key” www.green-key.org
4. The Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy
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3. „Energy Star” service mark www.energystar.gov
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2. Eco-label „The Blue Angel” www.blauer-engel.de
3. More eco-labels www.ecolabelindex.com
4. The EU Ecolabel www.ecolabel.eu www.ecolabel.dk
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www.solarcookers.org

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4. Danish 92-Group www.92grp.dk
5. Friends of the Earth (FoE) www.foe.org
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www.inforse.org



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HOMO ECOS:

is an environmental organisation with a mission to create a social movement that supports environmentally friendly ideas and puts them into practise through everyday actions and long-term decisions.

www.homoecos.lv



INFORSE - INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

is an NGO network with 85 members from 35 European countries. It was formed in 1992. The network lobbies to promote sustainable energy solutions through renewable energy and energy efficiency, utilising decentralised approaches. All activities seek to protect the environment and to achieve development.

www.inforse.org/europe



LATVIAN GREEN MOVEMENT

is a nongovernmental organisation focusing its work on three areas: climate issues and sustainable energy; sustainable coastal development; and supporting local initiatives and campaigns for improved environmental quality.

www.zalie.lv



CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS

is a non-profit non-governmental organization. CES was set up in 2009 in Belarus to promote eco-friendly lifestyles and principles of sustainable development, as well as to build international cooperation for the conservation of the environment.

www.ecoidea.by/en/about



DECARBONIZE
OUR FUTURE!

Par nākotni ar
samazinātām oglekļa
emisijām!



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www.homoecos.lv