



# MANUAL FOR ORGANISING A NATURE AND CLIMATE-FRIENDLY EVENT

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END THE GAME!



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## Why should you organise your event to be nature and climate-friendly?

Events of all sizes require a lot of water, energy, and materials, and generate waste and greenhouse gas emissions. If you plan your event to be nature and climate-friendly, you can reduce its harmful effects! There is no magic formula though for making a festival, conference, sports game, or other event completely harmless to nature and the environment. However, we should try to achieve this whenever we can! Why?

Rapid climate change is a man-made problem that has become the biggest challenge of the 21st century for us all. Greenhouse gases (mostly carbon dioxide, CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere block the reflection of solar heat back into space, meaning that the heat remains on Earth, heating it up. This process has an effect on nature (droughts, forest fires, floods, availability of fresh water etc.), creates social challenges (threats to public healthcare, especially for vulnerable groups), threatens various territories, etc.

This means that every nature and climate-conscious action we take is a significant step towards stemming climate change! This also includes the way we plan and organise events: from birthday celebrations with friends to huge public music festivals. From the viewpoint of nature and climate, the event industry holds a special position, because it involves a few activities that produce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. You have to maintain the site of the event, supply power for the lighting, sound, and other needs; you have to provide catering, transport, living accommodations.

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## Why should you organise your event to be nature and climate-friendly?

Ideas for how to make events nature and climate-friendly have been researched, promoted, and implemented for a good while now. Environmentalist organisations, event organisers, and various businesses are interested in these practices, and they currently enjoy attention in the media space. In view of this, as part of our 'Game On! Don't Let Climate Change End the Game' project we, the Latvian Fund for Nature, have put together a guide for how to organise a nature and climate-friendly event. It is based on our experience and on expert knowledge. We hope that its recommendations serve as motivation to assess all sides of the way events are organised and run, and help pay more attention to changing it!

We created the guide mostly with the needs and effects of open-air festivals in mind. However, many of its recommendations will be useful for other kinds of events, as it touches on many challenges that organisers of concerts, conferences, weddings or sports games have to face. These suggestions will be useful for event producers, as well as various other parties involved: performers, caterers, retailers, cleaning and transport contractors, technical staff, venue owners, communication specialists, sponsors, and municipalities where the events take place.

Improvements in climate performance can take different forms: some people will be more open to reducing the amount of waste, while others could start thinking about how to save electricity. Event organisers could focus on setting up an eco-friendly transport network, and certain open-air event organisers may not only take special care not to leave litter in the area, but also work on acquainting the public with local nature. You can choose an area of your own, or do a bit of everything, and focus on what you can do!

Organising an event is a complex and layered process in which you can distinguish five main aspects that you should consider doing the planning and organising of: catering, waste, energy and water, transport and location. The recommendations are broken down by these aspects.

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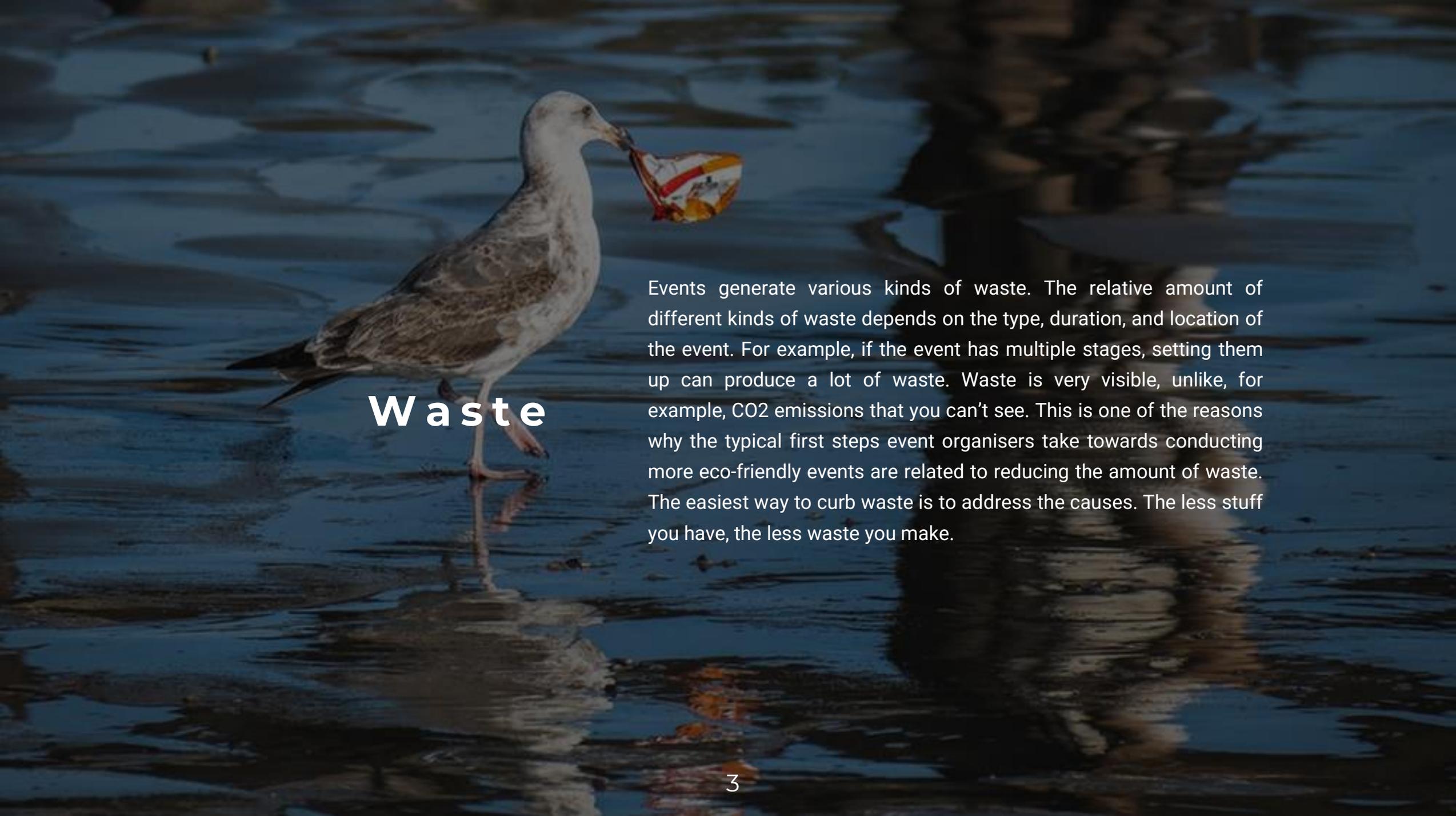
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A seagull with grey and white feathers stands in shallow, rippling water. It is holding a piece of colorful plastic trash, possibly a wrapper, in its beak. The water reflects the bird and the surrounding environment. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

# Waste

Events generate various kinds of waste. The relative amount of different kinds of waste depends on the type, duration, and location of the event. For example, if the event has multiple stages, setting them up can produce a lot of waste. Waste is very visible, unlike, for example, CO2 emissions that you can't see. This is one of the reasons why the typical first steps event organisers take towards conducting more eco-friendly events are related to reducing the amount of waste. The easiest way to curb waste is to address the causes. The less stuff you have, the less waste you make.

## Be wary of deceptive solutions

There are a bunch of products on the market that are said to have miraculous properties, as the manufacturer or distributor indicates that they are degradable, and compostable, and natural, and very eco-friendly. Promises like these written on the packaging do not always mean that the product is better than others. Ask your waste management contractor to understand the extent to which a particular product or piece of packaging is recyclable or compostable.

## Assess the necessity of every object

Sometimes you have things at events because they have always been there. And their original purpose has long been lost to memory. For this reason, as you plan your event, give a second thought to the necessity of each element.

## Use natural materials

Look for opportunities to use natural materials as signs. You can, for example, replace PVC banners with plywood signs and boards.

PVC banners are currently not recyclable, and made out of oil products (as all things containing plastic are). Meanwhile, natural materials will degrade more quickly once they get to the landfill. If they have not been treated with paint, varnish, or glue, you can burn them in stoves and bonfires.

## Borrow or rent

Renting or borrowing things makes it possible to save money and production resources, and lower the amount of waste that you have to hand over to the waste contractor after the event. Less waste means less cost!

## Donate after the event

Giving away products for later use can significantly reduce the amount of household waste you have to dispose of. It can also be very helpful to the people or organisations that get the products. For example, an animal shelter might find PVC banners useful (contact the animal shelter in your nearest municipality to discuss this with them). These banners can find uses in smaller farms (ask the Latvian Farmer Federation). Paper and cardboard materials can find artistic uses (ask local schools, youth centres, art schools, which might find them useful).

## Use second-hand products

Consider the possibility of buying used products for your event. This is a way to save both financial and production resources. For smaller events, exploring second-hand shops can be a particularly good way to buy the object you need, and create a unique mood in the venue.

## Create reusable things

Use stage design solutions that you can easily reuse in other events, or that someone else in the same industry can use. For example, you can avoid indicating the name or year of the event in your materials (or make the name and year indications easily removable).

The guests and participants of your event know where they are and what year it is, so indicating this information is unnecessary. If you have to include sponsors, do it so that you can easily remove the logos (e.g. by using removable stickers). Using neutral signage like this increases the chance of these objects finding applications at other events, reducing costs, consuming less resources, and generating less waste.

## Prepare digital event programmes

Create digital programmes for your event, or post them on a blackboard, so that they are easy to update if there are changes.

Printed programme leaflets become useless with the first schedule change, which is almost unavoidable at larger events. Also, if they continue to use the printed programme, guests can be misled as to the location and the time of the performance they are interested in.

## Offer an option to use electronic tickets

First, this produces less waste. Second, it's harder to lose or damage an electronic ticket.

## Assess if participant cards really need sleeves

Plastic is a light and durable material, and it can protect the participant card against damage, moisture, or dirt. But at an event that takes only a few days, especially if it is indoors, the chance of a guest coming in contact with water or dirt, or anything else that can soil the ticket isn't great. And if there is no reason to expect the event to offer really harsh conditions to its audience, these sleeves are not necessary. By dispensing with them, you will produce less waste (participant card sleeves are not accepted for recycling in Latvia), and save resources.

## Urge people to return event equipment

Ask participants to return any reusable event equipment, like participant card sleeves or ribbons. Use these at your future events, and talk about this.

This is an opportunity create less waste, reduce costs, and relieve the organisers of one thing to worry about: buying new participant card ribbons.

## **Make memorabilia on request**

Do not offer pre-made event memorabilia. Some pre-made memorabilia can be left over, becoming waste.

As part of events, you can work with companies (*Printful, Printify*) that offer custom-printed shirts, mugs, and other memorabilia.

## **Do not give any gifts to participants, guests, partners, or reporters!**

People who have come to your event have done so voluntarily – they want to earn money from it, or enjoy the event, or there is another reason for them to be at the event. So there is no need for any gifts to reward them for coming. You also can't know where the person is going after the event, and if they can easily and conveniently take the gift with them. Every eco-friendly gift turns eco-unfriendly if the person who receives it doesn't need it.

If you want to thank them for their involvement, give them digital photos from the event. And the person will then decide what to do with them: keep for personal use, publish on social media, or delete.

## **Urge your partners to refrain from using memorabilia**

Ask your partners and sponsors not to share free memorabilia, because these are a potential source of waste. You can present yourself to the public through shared experience, and not just things. For example, you can create games, quizzes, discussions that tell your story, or that of your partners.

## **Replace environmentally unfriendly ways of marking your event's guests**

If necessary, use paper or cotton event wristbands, or stamps. Making textile and plastic wristbands takes a lot of resources, and they are not recyclable.

## **Use recycled paper for printing.**

This way you can save natural resources that would have been spent making paper, and generate less pollution.

## **Do not launch difficult-to-recover items into water**

Do not put any objects into water, like wreaths made of plastic flowers, toy boats etc. They will not disappear, even if the river carries them away and you no longer can see them, and they will become waste.

## **Do not release any difficult-to-recover items into the air**

Do not release into the air any balloons, confetti, paper lanterns or other objects that are difficult to clean up. Instead, use soap bubbles, light shows, ornaments made out of natural materials (leaves, flowers, straw, etc.). Sooner or later, balloons fall onto the ground, so launching them into the air is effectively the same as discarding them on the ground.

Balloons can travel hundreds of kilometres, and pollute natural areas. Confetti gives a few seconds of joy, but making it costs resources and produces pollution, and picking confetti up and disposing it after the event is not always easy, so it's recommended not to use it. Ask the participants of your event (e.g. musicians) not to use it in their performances. It is very difficult to pick up if used somewhere in nature, and it gets stuck in grass, moss, etc. Never launch lanterns that consist of a paper dome and rise in the air if there is a flame inside them. They will fall onto the ground and become waste. And in the worst-case scenario, a lantern that is still burning can ignite buildings, dry farmland, or natural areas.

In Slītere National Park in Latvia, they once found a balloon launched from a supermarket in Warsaw, 600 km away. In 2019, teachers in Riga had a demonstration demanding higher wages. But in the days afterwards, the public discussion was not about how much teachers are paid, but about the balloons released into the air during the demonstration, which drew much condemnation. This example shows that people put more and more value into the attitude of organisations towards the environment.

## **Contact your waste management contractor to discuss sorting waste**

Contact your waste management contractor about options and conditions for sorting waste. Waste managers don't charge any fees for the pick up of correctly sorted glass and light packaging (paper, metal, plastic). But to make sure you sort your waste correctly, discuss this directly with the waste manager, because sorting rules are different in different municipalities.

## **Plan for the locations where sortable waste will be created**

Plan the potential locations where sortable waste will be created, and make it possible to sort the waste there. Different events produce different kinds of waste. If you plan for the kinds of waste that will be there, you can make the sorting more efficient. Multiple-day events tend to have catering, so make it possible for people to sort food waste. In the smoking area, put up special boxes for electronic cigarettes, which you can dispose of for free as small electronic devices.

Multiple-day events tend to have catering, so make it possible for people to sort food waste. People often smoke at events, so in your smoking area, set up special boxes for electronic cigarettes, which you can dispose of for free as small electronic devices.

## **Talk about ways to sort waste to all involved: guests, security, staff etc.**

Inform guests, security guards, cleaners, caterers, and technical staff. Waste sorting will fail if you don't inform all those involved that sorting is necessary. It is important to communicate this before the event (especially to the staff) and during it (clearly stating and reminding people of the kinds of waste that doesn't go in sorting bins, like dirty and wet paper packaging).

## **Engage in activities educating people about sorting waste**

Work with NGOs and waste management companies. It is these companies and NGOs working in the waste management field who know best the details of sorting waste in the given area.

## **Set up separate smoking areas**

Put up ashtrays with a lid, and boxes for discarding electronic smoking devices. Point out to people that they are smoking where smoking isn't allowed, and direct them to where they may smoke.

If smoking is allowed everywhere, there will be butts all over the event site, and not just in the ashtrays. Cigarette butts contain plastic, and do not naturally decompose for years, and the harmful substances in them end up in the environment. Collecting electronic cigarette devices is also important – if you do not collect them separately, they will also wind up in the environment, or mixed with household waste. At least some of them can only be recycled if you collect them separately.

## **Involve participants in cleaning the area**

Offer bonuses for collected waste. If your event spans over multiple days, you should begin cleaning already during it. Some guests will be happy to join in on cleaning the area if they get free food or drinks in return. But don't ever offer memorabilia for the work – these will only add to the waste.

At the Hurricane festival in Germany, guests that hand over the plastic waste they have collected get credit at a nearby grocery shop. This not only simplifies the management of waste during the festival, but also encourages its guests to bring less food and other things with them. One benefit for them is lighter bags to carry. Another is that it's an opportunity to shop locally without spending too much, and this works as an argument against bringing too big of a food reserve. This is good, because these reserves often don't get consumed, becoming waste.

## Report on the amount of waste collected by the public

Share information about how much waste was handed over for recycling, and how much wound up in a landfill. Report on the goals for your next event, and thank all those involved for their efforts in reducing waste.

This way, you will not only create an image of a responsible organiser, but also make it possible for those interested to find out what has been done, and what is planned.

## Prefer reusable containers

Reusable containers are more stable, do not get soggy, are less prone to heat up, and it is easier to hold them in your hands without crushing them. Metal spoons, forks, and knives also make eating a simpler task, as compared to their plastic counterparts. If your knife is made out of wood, it's considerably harder to cut anything with it. And if you inadvertently crush a disposable plastic cup, you will spill the drink inside it. With reusable tableware, drinking and eating is much easier and more convenient.

Event organisers who have dealt with both disposable and reusable tableware in their concerts, discussions, and sports games, note on how enjoyable it is to see the location of the event not littered with plastic cups once everyone is gone. If you believe that you still cannot arrange for everyone involved to get reusable tableware, provide it for some of the people, such as the staff, or VIP guests.

The Komēta festival in Riga has replaced some disposable tableware with glass and ceramic tableware. It has a cupboard with donated and returned tableware. And every guest can pick something up to pour some coffee, or have lunch. Afterwards, they wash the tableware they used, and put it back on the shelf. The festival's organisers point out that they have never had any safety issues so far – the guests handle the tableware carefully, nothing breaks, and there are no dangerous glass fragments lying about.

## Introduce deposit cups/mugs

You can reuse ceramic, glass or hard polymer cups countless times, and the deposit fee that the consumer pays for them works as an incentive for returning them. This means that they don't end up in large quantities on the ground, or in the environment. Naturally, every event organiser arranges for the cleaning of the area after the event ends, but it is worth keeping in mind that disposable plastic cups are very light, and once dropped on the ground, they can be easily picked up by wind and blown away from the site of the event. Technically, this is not the organiser's responsibility, but the reality is that the locals will associate this litter with the event.

A few festivals in Latvia (such as LAMPA and 'Laba daba') have already used the approach with deposit fees and reusable cups whose life does not end after you drink out of them once. They continue to work for years, one event after another.

A similar system can be found in a few Christmas markets, for example in Kiel, Germany. There, you pay a few euros for a ceramic mug decorated with holiday symbols, which you then pour hot drinks into. The guests who want to keep the mug are allowed to do that – in effect, they have bought it with the initial fee. Those who don't want it, can return it, and get the deposit back. Serving drinks like this is not just about being eco-friendly. Another important point is that it's easier to hold a hot drink in your hands if it is in a mug with a handle, made of a thick and hard material, rather than a thin, quickly heating plastic or paper cup.

## **How does it happen?**

The guest 'buys' the first mug for a few euros. For every drink they buy after that, the seller takes the used mug, and serves the drink in a new one. Once the guest decides they've had enough drinks, they can return the mug, and get those initial few euros refunded.

The event organisers who have used deposit mugs mention how nice it is not to see the place of their event littered with plastic cups. It is also worth keeping in mind that disposable plastic cups are light, and easily get picked up by the wind that moves them away from the location of the event, and the idea that the caretaker will clean everything up after the event is flawed, because the only waste that will be collected will be the waste that remains in place.

The containers are then washed, and used at the next event.

## **Arrange for a way to get drinking water in a container brought by the guest**

This is a way to avoid unnecessary litter from discarded plastic bottles. These bottles are usually good for sorting and recycling, it still takes resources. So the easiest way is not to produce this waste in the first place, no matter how recyclable.

## **Encourage participants to come with their own containers**

Ask guests to bring their own lunch boxes and thermal mugs to use with the food and drinks they buy – this reduces the need for disposable containers. Also remind the caterers that using such reusable containers is both desirable, and to be encouraged. This way, you will curb the demand for disposable tableware.

## **Separately indicate the price of disposable containers**

In the catering zone where food is sold in disposable containers, indicate the price of these containers separately. This is required in Latvian retail outlets.

Showing the price reminds the consumer that this object costs something. This will encourage them to look for ways to avoid paying, for example, by bringing their own containers.

## For multiple-day events, ask guests to bring less food and drink

Excess food and drinks become waste. In 2019, the 'Laba daba' festival managed to reduce the amount of its household waste by 40%, compared to the previous year. The biggest step in achieving this goal was to inform the people and to diligently work on making them bring less food and drinks to the event. In other years, there was food left over on the festival grounds after it, but that particular time, the amount of that waste was very low. The organisers of the festival were happy not only about the reduced harm to the environment, but also having to spend less on waste disposal.

## Offer a way to rent a tent and its accessories

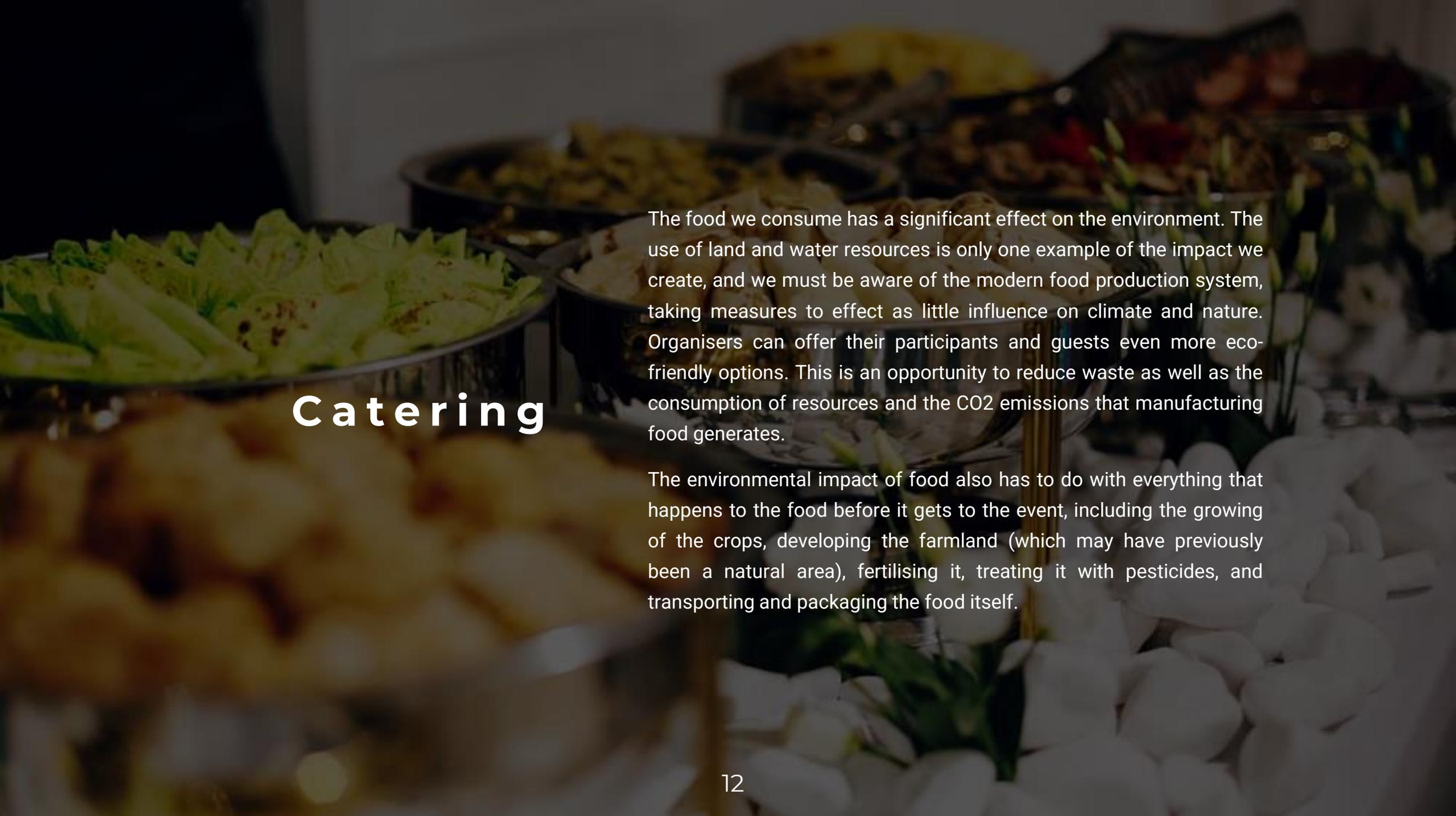
For people who don't own a tent or a sleeping bag, this will be an opportunity to comfortably spend the night in the tent camp without having to spend too much. The option to rent a fully prepared tent spot is also good for those who don't fancy having to take the tent down and bring it back home, and if there is a way to rent a tent that's already there, the guest can just use it, go home, and not worry about taking care of the tent.

Positivus offered tents as an option for an overnight stay at the festival. Participants could rent a well-equipped tent and not worry about bringing too many things. You can arrange this option with tent and event equipment rental companies who already have all the necessary things, for better partnerships and more revenue.

## Ask people not to leave their personal belongings at the site of the event

Personal things left at the site of the event become waste.





# Catering

The food we consume has a significant effect on the environment. The use of land and water resources is only one example of the impact we create, and we must be aware of the modern food production system, taking measures to effect as little influence on climate and nature. Organisers can offer their participants and guests even more eco-friendly options. This is an opportunity to reduce waste as well as the consumption of resources and the CO2 emissions that manufacturing food generates.

The environmental impact of food also has to do with everything that happens to the food before it gets to the event, including the growing of the crops, developing the farmland (which may have previously been a natural area), fertilising it, treating it with pesticides, and transporting and packaging the food itself.

## Create a climate-friendly menu

Offer less meat and more plant-based foods at your event. Let the caterers and the guests know about it. One effective way to reduce carbon dioxide and methane emission is to cut meat and dairy from your diet.

Growing and feeding animals takes a huge amount of land, as 77% of farmland is used for this purpose, while only 18% of the calories and 37% of the protein can be found in meat and dairy products – the rest (i.e. the most) comes from plants. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> generated by transport (6%) is tiny compared to the production of food. It is almost as much as the amount of greenhouse gases created by product packaging (5%).

For more details, see:

<https://ourworldindata.org/agricultural-land-by-global-diets>

<https://ourworldindata.org/food-ghg-emissions>

## Choose local and seasonal products

Keeping greenhouses for fruits and vegetables consumes a lot of electricity. So it is better to choose the products that you can grow without a greenhouse. Transporting foods also generates CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and the less they travel, the better. During summer events refrain from offering oranges or bananas, instead preferring local strawberries, bilberries, gooseberries, and other foods.

In winter, offer more roots and legumes kept since autumn.

## Choose organic, certified, and other foods whose production does not destroy ecosystems

Organic foods are made by using natural methods in farming, without using chemically synthesised substances, e.g. pesticides and fertilisers. A healthy soil is a prerequisite for farming; it must be in natural and living harmony with diverse flora and fauna, and living processes are encouraged within the soil to increase harvest yields. Organic farming is based on a healthy and right soil that can resist pests and diseases by itself.

Conventional farming uses thousands of tonnes of man-made pesticides every year; they pollute the soil, local waters, and can end up on our plates. Chemicals that directly destroy pests also inevitably have an effect on local wildlife and the environment.

### Euro Leaf: EU's organic food certificate

This certificate guarantees that no synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, or antibiotics were used in the growing of the food. Farms with higher biodiversity are more resilient to the consequences of climate change.



# Catering

## Rainforest Alliance certificate

The certificate covers agricultural products grown (either fully or partially) in a tropical climate, such as coffee, chocolate, bananas, tea. This certificate does not mean that no synthetic pesticides or fertilisers are used, but rather that their use is subject to strict requirements.

The certificate guarantees the preservation of biodiversity, which in this climate zone suffers a lot from conventional agriculture.



## Fair trade certificate

It focuses on social and economic justice. The standards of the fair trade movement require certified organisations to make sure that their workplaces and supply chains uphold these principles:

1. The manufacturer is paid a fair price for their product;
2. Democracy and social equality are observed in production;
3. The economic growth of the manufacturer is fostered, encouraging it to follow environmentally harmless requirements in production.

**FLO Fairtrade** is the most prominent fair trade certification system in Europe. This organisation certifies various products whose ingredients come from developing countries. Most of the products sold are foods: coffee, bananas, cocoa, tea, sugar, honey, juice, rice, spices, wine. Less common ones include **Fairtrade FLO** cotton, artisanal products, jewellery (gold and silver), and flowers.

For more information about ecolabels, see:

1. <https://globalecolabelling.net/>
2. <https://ekomarkejums.lv/>
3. <https://www.zalabriviba.lv/ilgtspejigs-paterins/ekomarkejums>
4. <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/informacija-par-eiropas-ekomarkejumu>



## Estimate how many people will want to eat at your event

This will make it possible to plan the amount of food, and not generate any food waste.

## Provide detailed information to the caterers

Inform your caterers about the number of people eating, the meal times, other caterers, and the features of the catering zone. For your caterers to know what to offer themselves, they need to understand what is offered by others, and if the event's guests will be able to sit down for a meal. This is critical, because some foods you can comfortably eat standing, but for others, sitting down is important. This is a factor in creating a successful menu.

## If your guests are bringing their own food, set up a list

If you encourage people to bring their own food to the event, coordinate a food list, so that people do not bring the same kind of foods to the table. The more foods of the same kind you have, the more likely they are not to be consumed, and to become waste.

## Let every person decide the size of their portion

Buffet service and weighed portions reduce food waste: those who want to eat less, put less food on their plate, and hungrier people will take more. So everyone can choose the food group that they enjoy the most.

**Important!** Remind your guests that they should put less on their plate than they would like to, because they will be able to get more later, especially if there are children whose portions are put together by their parents.

Also, if you believe that the nature of your event does not allow for self-service catering, think if perhaps there is a part of the participants that could be fed using this approach. If arranging this type of catering for all guests is too complex, self-service catering could be set up separately for the event's organisers, performers, or speakers.

## Avoid small packaging.

Having spices, sugar, coffee cream in larger containers is both an eco-friendlier and cheaper choice. Consider the following options:

- ✓ sugar: instead of small paper sachets, use a sugar container with a dispenser;
- ✓ salt and pepper: instead of small packaging, use salt and pepper shakers;
- ✓ do not use small milk tabs for coffee, have a large milk pack or a milk can.

## **Inform your guests of portion sizes**

Indicate the size of the container or portion in grams. This will make it possible for the client to decide how much they need. (Do I take a soup along with the entree? Or just the soup? Or do I have enough space for a dessert, too?) This reduces the likelihood of people choosing a portion that is too big.

## **Make it possible for people to get free water in their own containers or glasses**

This will help eliminate the waste coming from plastic water bottles.

## **Urge people to bring their own tableware**

Ask your guests to bring their own water bottles and food boxes, and encourage your caterers to accept tableware brought by guests. If people see that caterers readily accept the containers they bring, they will happily do this in the future. This will help reduce the amount of waste at the event.

## **Thank all people who got involved**

Thank everyone who brought their own containers, chose eco-friendly meals, and bought the portions sizes that they needed rather than bigger ones. The people who actively participated in reducing waste will be happy to hear this. This will also tell those who hear this that you are working on reducing waste, and there has been some success.

## **Do not use single-use disposable tableware**

Alternatives include deposit tableware and self-service cupboards with tableware. This is possible even at larger events. How? There are a few options. Use reusable deposit cups, or simply reusable containers.

Reusable containers are more stable, do not get soggy, are less prone to heat up, and it is easier to hold them in your hands without crushing them. Metal spoons, forks, and knives also make eating a simpler task, as compared to their plastic counterparts. If your knife is made out of wood, it's considerably harder to cut anything with it. And if you inadvertently crush a disposable plastic cup, you will spill the drink inside it. With reusable tableware, drinking and eating is much easier and more convenient. Event organisers who have dealt with both disposable and reusable tableware in their concerts, discussions, and sports games, note on how enjoyable it is to see the location of the event not littered with plastic cups once everyone is gone.

# Catering

A few festivals in Latvia have already used the approach with deposit fees and reusable cups whose life does not end after one drink. They continue to work for years, one event after another.

## How does it happen?

The guest 'buys' the first mug for a few euros. For every drink they buy after that, the seller takes the used mug, and serves the drink in a new one. Once the guest decides they've had enough drinks, they can return the cup, and get those initial few euros refunded.

The event organisers who have used deposit mugs mention how nice it is not to see the place of their event littered with plastic cups. It is also worth keeping in mind that disposable plastic cups are light, and easily get picked up by the wind that moves them away from the location of the event, and the idea that the caretaker will clean everything up after the event is flawed, because the only waste that will be collected will be the waste that remains in place.

The containers are then washed, and used at the next event.

A similar system can be found in a few Christmas markets, for example in Kiel, Germany. There, you pay a few euros for a ceramic mug decorated with holiday symbols, which you then pour hot drinks into. The guests who want to keep the mug are allowed to do that – in effect, they have bought it with the initial fee.

Those who don't want the mug, can return it, and get the deposit back. Serving drinks like this is not just about being eco-friendly. Another important point is that it's easier to hold a hot drink in your hands if it is in a mug with a handle, made of a thick and hard material, rather than a thin, quickly heating plastic or paper cup.

The Komēta festival in Riga has replaced some disposable tableware with glass and ceramic tableware. It has a cupboard with donated and returned tableware. And every guest can pick something up to pour some coffee, or have lunch. Afterwards, they wash the tableware they used, and put it back on the shelf. The festival's organisers point out that they have never had any safety issues so far – the guests handle the tableware carefully, nothing breaks, and there are no dangerous glass fragments lying about.

## If you still can't avoid disposable containers, ask for an additional fee for them

This will remind the buyer that nothing is free, and these containers cost money. This is required for plastic containers. (This rule may be different in other countries).

## Offer the event's participants to take leftover food

Prepare food boxes for this purpose, or ask the caterer to provide them. This is the simplest way not to lose food – giving food away to your staff does not require any permits or registrations. 28% of farmland is used to grow food that is never consumed. This unnecessarily destroys biodiversity, wastes water, generates pollution and carbon emissions.

See: <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/196402/icode/>

## Donate the food

Donate leftover food to charities. Find out the rules for making these donations. The Food and Veterinary Service supervises them in Latvia. All countries have people who cannot afford food. This way you can achieve 2 good things: reduced food waste and help those who need food.

## Compost leftover food

If necessary, contact a waste contractor or NGOs (Zero Waste Latvija, 'Latvijas Permakultūras biedrība') to find out how to do it.

Composting converts waste into a valuable material for gardening and agriculture. You can use it in your own greenery, or give it away to someone else with a garden.

You can also compost at the site of the event, and involve its guests and participants in the process. You can set up a flower bed using this compost. This could be a good way to report on this good practice next year. This could result in a great set of educational activities, but its success requires hiring a composting expert.

## Sort and dispose food waste

Sort the food waste and hand it over to the waste contractor as biodegradable waste.

This waste will go to a processing plant that will make compost, and possibly, biogas out of it (depending on the specifications of the plant).

## Note the kinds of foods most commonly left over on the table

Next time, reduce the quantity of these foods. By choosing to serve smaller portions, you reduce food waste.

## Be wary of deceptive solutions

Paper cups and mugs have plastic coating making sure that the container does not get soggy or fall apart as it comes in contact with the drink. A cup like that completely decomposes neither in a compost heap, nor in a landfill or in nature.

## Compostable bioplastic cups

Sometimes manufacturers indicate that their cups are of biological origin and are compostable. In theory, they could be composted, but you should understand in what conditions – ask your waste manager if they can provide these conditions.

If the cups are compostable, collect them separately. They will not compost with the rest of the household waste in a landfill. Composting is ruled by a set of certain parameters (time, temperature, etc.). If it says that the cup can be composted in a compost heap, then it should go there. If it says that it can be composted in industrial facilities, then consult your waste contractor.

## Tell your guests about food waste

Give them the relatively bad news by telling them how much food was wasted. Set a goal to reduce the amount next year.

This will show the public that you care about the issue, working on how to improve the situation.



# Energy and water

Energy and water are two big actors in what pertains to resources and the environment.

During events, you need energy for lighting and sound, as well as cooking, and storing food and drinks. Filming an event, storing the recordings, processing or streaming them takes energy too, so even if guests attend online, it does not preclude energy consumption or CO2 emissions. In this section we look at ways to reduce the amount of energy that in-person events consume and offer good advice for improving the situation. However, we do not go into digital events, because they have been studied relatively little so far, with too little consistently collected data to make any justified conclusions.

You need water to maintain life, for social and economic welfare, to protect and preserve ecosystems. As the global population rises, so too does the consumption of water. There are drier regions in the world where water shortages are becoming more pronounced, and in many places, people already have difficulty accessing clean fresh water. People in Latvia do not feel any lack of water, but its consumption is subject to reducing the impact of various environmental factors.

If your event takes place outdoors, you have to bring water there somehow, which takes energy and work. Depending on the intended use, it must be then handed over for treatment, which is a paid service. You have to heat hot water, both indoors and outdoors, which takes a lot of energy, which is why it is so important not to waste water, a resource that we spend energy and money to provide, ultimately generating more CO2 emissions. There is also a question of ethics: should we be careless using what we currently have in abundance? We shouldn't, of course. Moreover, current changes in the climate presage more frequent extreme weather events. While the overall amount of water is likely to remain sufficient, local periods of drought are very possible.

## Be wary of deceptive solutions

One possible example of such fake solutions is the use of biodiesel to run a generator. In theory, biodiesel could be an emission-free fuel, because the plant accumulates the CO<sub>2</sub> in its tissues through photosynthesis. Once the plant is turned into fuel, and as this fuel burns, it releases that same carbon that was captured by the plant.

So if you capture 1 unit of CO<sub>2</sub>, and then burn 1 unit of CO<sub>2</sub>, you get a net 0.

However, in practice, this would only be true if the field with the plant works itself, if the seeds sow themselves, if you don't have to use any fertilisers or pesticides, if the harvest picks itself up from the field and magically transforms into fuel. All of these processes take energy and emit CO<sub>2</sub>. The only exception when we could consider biodiesel a better choice than traditional fossil fuels is if the biodiesel is made of waste, of leftover stuff that is created through other processes, and has to be disposed of anyway.

So if you are considering the use of biodiesel, ask the seller or manufacturer where it comes from: made from waste, or plants specifically grown for the purpose. The fact that you use biodiesel is very unlikely to make your event 'green'.

## Choose renewable energy

This will help reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the event. In Latvia, currently

a few companies offer this service. The event organiser's task is to show interest and let the owners of the venue know that the availability of renewable energy would be important.

## For outdoor events, look for ways to connect to the mains

In 2018, the average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions indicator for European electric power producers was 0.31 t CO<sub>2</sub>/MWh, while Latvenergo in Latvia produced about 0.16 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per MWh. This difference is thanks to the proportion of hydroelectric power, as well as the relatively efficient cogeneration plants. A 2012 study showed that an average diesel generator produces about 0.8–0.9 CO<sub>2</sub> per MWh. Though these technologies are obviously advancing towards better efficiency, the electricity you get from a generator still involves more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than mains electricity. Moving the energy produced by diesel generators to the mains is a way to reduce the possible volume of emission.

## Plan the necessity for generators

Running a generator at less than full capacity means less efficiency (i.e. it burns relatively more fuel to make less energy) and more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Carefully planning the details can help avoid including too much of a reserve, so the operation of the generators becomes more efficient.

# Energy and water

## Make a list of electric devices

Find out exactly what your participants need – ask them to record every electric appliance that they intend to use.

This will help estimate the necessary amount of electricity with better precision and plan a more efficient quantity and location of the generators.

## Agree on a limit of power consumption that you are not allowed to exceed

Agree with your participants on a limit of power consumption that you are not allowed to exceed. This will help reduce the CO2 emissions produced.

## Warn them that if the limit is exceeded, you can disconnect the power, or charge an extra fee

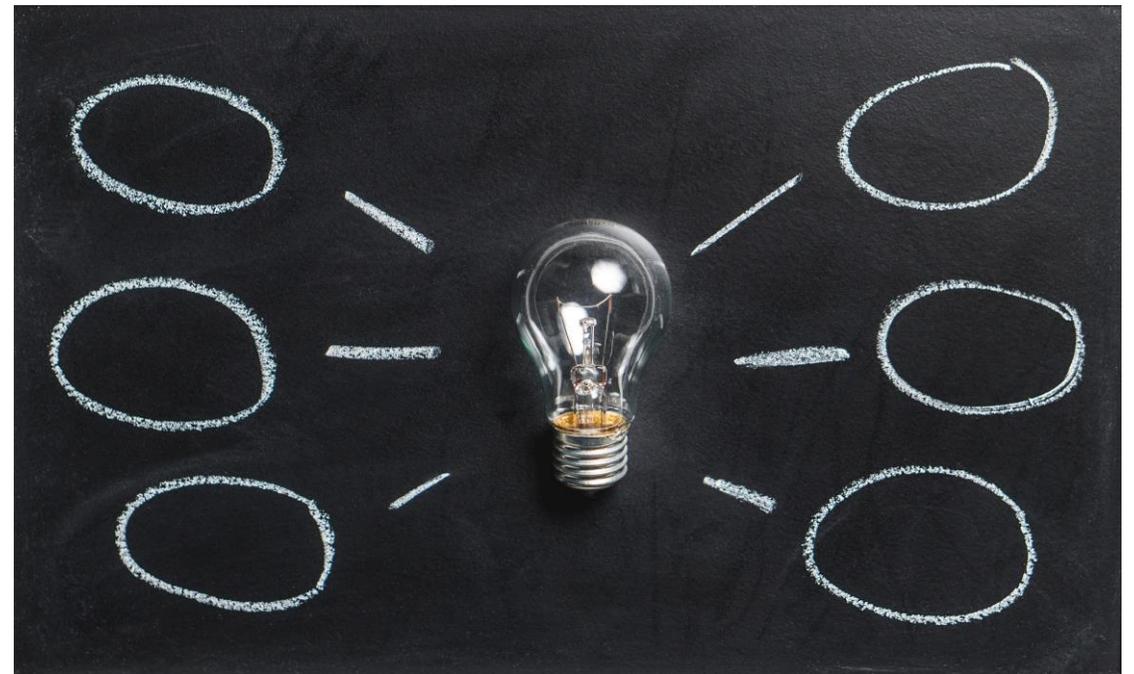
This will help estimate the necessary amount of electricity with better precision and plan a more efficient quantity and location of the generators.

## Do not use lighting during the day

This way, you will reduce your CO2 emissions without jeopardising the event or the comfort of its participants.

## Inspect and discuss the electricity plan and its achievement

For all participants this will help them to better understand whether their estimates are accurate, and for the organisers, the list will not only enable them to calculate the total amount of electricity necessary, but also understand when they should expect peak prices and what would be the maximum consumption of electricity.



## **Do not play loud music where it is not necessary**

At a concert or disco, loud music is self-evident, but at a culinary festival or fair, it can not only waste energy, but also disturb its participants and guests.

## **Use LED lightbulbs instead of incandescent ones**

Many in the event industry have already transitioned to LED lighting, but some organisers still stick to outmoded technology. Investing in new lighting really pays off! First, LED lamps can consume tens of times less electricity than incandescent lamps to get the same effect. Second, LED lamps take less resources setting up the stage, because they are lighter, and don't need very strong structures to hold them.

## **In areas where people do not spend time all the time, use lights with motion sensors**

This will help save electricity and reduce CO2, without any negative effects for the course of the event, or the comfort of its audience.

## **Use foods that require less heating**

Plan your menu so that cooking the dishes requires as little heat processing as possible. This will help save electricity and reduce CO2, without any negative effects for the course of the event or the comfort of its audience.

## **In your menu, use more foods that don't need storing in a fridge or freezer**

This will help save electricity and reduce CO2, without any negative effects for the course of the event, or the comfort of its audience.

## **Arrange your equipment in an efficient way**

Put in the wrong place, equipment can not only waste electricity, but also cause problems for other devices **(do not put fridges out in the sun, cookers next to fridges, etc.)**

# Energy and water

## Look for an option to connect to existing water mains

This is the most energy-efficient and eco-friendly solution. Even if the local water supply is not sufficient for all your needs, look for ways to use the existing water supply system for at least a part of your event. For example, you might have to bring your own water for the showers, but supply the water for catering from the local mains.

## Install low-flow attachments on showers and taps

This will help save water without jeopardising hygiene or comfort.

## Provide a supply of water if necessary

You can achieve smarter consumption of water by using buttons that turn the water off if not pressed, or by requiring tokens or coins that provide water for a certain period.

This will help not only to save water, but also to limit the spread of the puddles that tend to show up in places like hand washing stations at open-air festivals. A system like this will encourage people to spend less time in the shower, also helping make the queues shorter.

## Put up signs next to showers, toilets, sinks asking people not to keep the tap open unnecessarily

You could, for example, urge people to close the tap as they brush their teeth. This will help not only to save water, but also to limit the spread of the puddles that tend to show up in places like hand washing stations at open-air festivals.

## Use water-free urinals

They use gravity to work, and you do not need water to flush the urine. Indicate next to the urinal that it does not use water, to avoid confusion among its users.



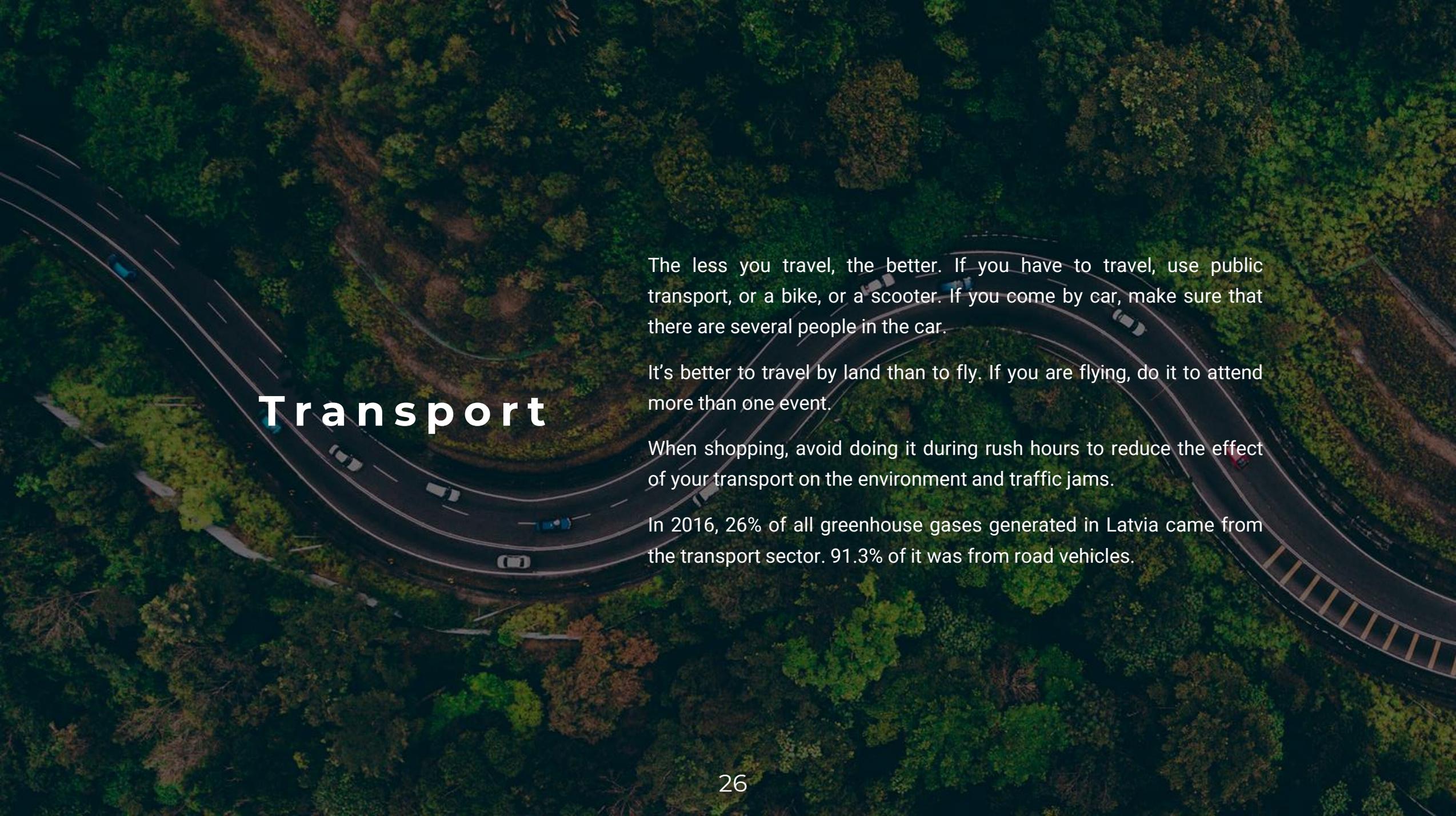
## Generate your own solar or wind power for the event

Because the cost of generating solar and wind power is going down while the price of fossil fuels is very volatile, using renewables can help both reduce costs, and plan for them. It is particularly important that the transition to renewables significantly curbs CO2 emissions.

## Inform participants and guests of the amount of energy and water consumed

This will show both them and the general public that you are serious in your work saving resources. **Present your plans for your next event!**



An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, green forest. Several cars are visible on the road, including a blue car, a white car, and a red car. The road has white lane markings and a dashed center line. The forest is lush and green, with some trees showing signs of autumn. The overall scene is captured from a high angle, looking down at the road and the surrounding trees.

# Transport

The less you travel, the better. If you have to travel, use public transport, or a bike, or a scooter. If you come by car, make sure that there are several people in the car.

It's better to travel by land than to fly. If you are flying, do it to attend more than one event.

When shopping, avoid doing it during rush hours to reduce the effect of your transport on the environment and traffic jams.

In 2016, 26% of all greenhouse gases generated in Latvia came from the transport sector. 91.3% of it was from road vehicles.

## Provide free public transport

Work with public transport service providers to make it possible for the participants of your event to use public transport free of charge.

Brighton & Hove Albion, a football club of the English Premier League, provides the fans with free bus rides to the stadium for its home games. This not only reduces CO2 emissions, but also helps with road congestion, as people can get to the game on time, and enjoy it in full. This also reduces the need for parking. The event organisers no longer have to arrange and pay for any additional car parks. And if the stadium already has parking spaces that remain empty, its owners can generate additional income by offering these spaces to local residents and guests.

## For events with larger audiences, arrange for additional public transport trips, or for more capacity as part of normally scheduled trips

This will reduce traffic congestion. Less congestion means higher likelihood of arriving at the event on time, and enjoying it fully.

## Set up your own public transport route

If there is no regular public transport going to the place of the event, work with passenger transport companies to provide your own event buses. This will reduce traffic congestion. Less congestion means higher likelihood of arriving at the event on time, and enjoying it fully.

You can't reach all places by train. And buses only go to specific locations. However, you can technically drive a bus anywhere suited for road vehicles. 'Laba daba' festival bus. Photo: Ernests Dinka.

The 'Laba daba' festival takes place in Ratnieki, Vidzeme region, about 12 kilometres from Sigulda. There are trains going to Sigulda from Riga, Valka, Valmiera, and Cēsis. It is an excellent high-capacity, low-emission mode of transportation. However, 12 kilometres is a bit too much of a walk for the majority of festival guests who arrive there with heavy bags (still, every year, there is a group that takes a 12-kilometre hike through the Gauja National Park trails between Sigulda and Ratnieki). This is why every year, 'Laba daba', in conjunction with passenger transport providers in Sigulda, offers a festival bus bringing people from the train station in Sigulda to the site of the festival. The guests pay a small fee for the trip. The bus trips are aligned with the train arrival and departure times.

## Coordinate the event schedule with that of public transport

Guests will only use public transport if using a bus or a train will make it possible for them to enjoy what they want. If they see that the event ends after the last bus or train, they will look for other transport options.

Do not plan the initial performances to take place before the first buses or trains arrive, and plan for the event to end so that you can go to the station without too much hurry after it. Publish public transport schedules on the event website or social media. You can also post the schedules at the festival, for example, on sign boards.

## Encourage people to car pool

Set parking fees depending on the number of passengers, facilitate participants' communication with each other to arrange coming together etc. The more people that come together, the fewer cars that will go to the event. The fewer traffic jams there are, the more likely you are to come to the event on time.

You can set rules: the fuller the car is, the lower the fee, or the parking spot it gets is closer to the event.

## Work with cab, car pooling, and short-term car-rental service providers

For the transport company, you can provide a large number of possible clients, while they can offer special conditions for groups of people who want to use their cars to come to the event together.

This way, you can assure that more people travel in every car. Another positive effect here is also that these cars leave, and don't sit in the event's car park.

### Positivus works with Baltic TAXI at its festival camp

Positivus, a festival that takes place in Salacgrīva, has worked with cab and car pooling companies a few times. They offer a way to travel from Riga to the festival location at a price that is higher than that of a public transport ticket, but lower than the cost of one person coming in their own private car and leaving it at a paid car park. The client is picked up at a convenient location, and brought to the festival entrance – a vital benefit for people who bring a lot of things with them, which is common for festivals.

A few operators in Latvia offer short-term car rentals – this way, you can pick up a car drive it to your destination, and if it is within the area indicated by the car rental provider,

# Transport

you can leave the car there so that someone else who wants to travel from that place can take it.

Car sharing spots are typically in places with a lot of everyday traffic, to make it more likely that the car not only travels to that location, but also so that there is someone else who wants to travel from there. If the event location is not among the allowed destinations, contact the car sharing provider in question, and strike a deal – the company could be interested in including your event as one of the allowed destinations, if they know that there will be many people who could use these cars.

In Latvia, car sharing companies also offer electric vehicles that pollute much less, and have much less of an effect on climate change. This approach can make it possible to come to the event for people who find walking, cycling, or using public transport difficult, without overwhelming the event's car park.

## **Thank those who chose an eco-friendly method of transportation**

Thanking people is important, because this way, you show that it's something important for the event, thus encouraging the public to think about available travel options and their travel choices.

## **Publicly available data**

**Report on how many guests arrived on foot, by public transport, cycled, or came in their own car.** This could be an interesting piece of information to share after the event, if it's hard to find content to publish on social or traditional media. This will clearly indicate that you really monitor the implementation of a sustainable transport system at your event. You won't always be able to get data about the transport habits of all of your guests, and this is normal. Use the data that you can collect.

## **Ask the public why they did not prefer more eco-friendly methods of transportation, and what would make them choose otherwise for the next event**

The information you get will be helpful planning the event and solving actual problems in the future. These solutions could become good indicators for what to improve in future events, and how.

## Expect traffic jams

Plan deliveries and participant arrivals such as to avoid rush hours in traffic; offer an option to deliver the equipment at agreed times. This is a step towards reducing congestion and emissions.

As part of the installation of stages at the LAMPA conversation festival, time is planned for every participant.

## Provide bicycles

If you know that the event organiser team will have to move around a lot, provide them with bicycles. This will help them quickly solve problems at the event without wasting resources.

## Set the number of parking spaces for various groups involved

For example, for caterers, retailers, performers, security guards,

etc. If not every person involved is provided with a way to leave their car in a car park, this will work as encouragement to look for options to share a vehicle with others, to prefer public transport or cycling.

## Show participants different routes for arrival

Mention that a plane is not the only option, and you can come by ferry, a bus, or a train. Indicate specific operators that run land or water transport lines, so that it is easier for people to decide against flying.

For example, the distance between Riga and Tallinn is about 300 km. A bus trip between the centres of the two cities takes 4 hours and 25 minutes. A flight is 4 hours and 20 minutes: the flight itself is 50 minutes, but then it's 30 minutes to take a bus to the airport, 30 minutes from the airport to downtown, making sure that you arrive on time, dealing with the luggage, going through security, and boarding the plane is about 2 hours, and the trip from the airport to the bus is 30 minutes.

## Inform people of other events

Tell participants about other events that take place at roughly the same time as yours, so that it makes more sense for them to take a plane for the longer trip. This way you can make their flights more useful and sensible. Flying long distances for a half-hour performance really is inefficient.

Musicians rarely travel to another continent for the sake of just one concert. Usually, these concerts are part of a tour: the musicians and their teams travel from America to Europe, play 30 concerts in various

locations, and then fly back home. In these situations, you shouldn't blame yourself believing that people took a long transatlantic flight just for your event. It doesn't usually happen that way.

## **Inform organisers of other events**

If you want to invite a businessperson, scientist, artist, or other prominent person to your event, and they will have to fly to your location, talk to the organisers of similar events in the region, so that they could also decide to invite that person.

This creates additional events to come to for this particular person, and their coming to yours becomes much more efficient from an environmental perspective.

## **Encourage participants to prefer economy rather than business class flights**

These consume less resources due to the more economical service and more efficient use of space.

## **Encourage participants to prefer direct flights**

Flying without transfers saves natural resources, generates less pollution, and saves time and money that may have been spent shopping at the airport.

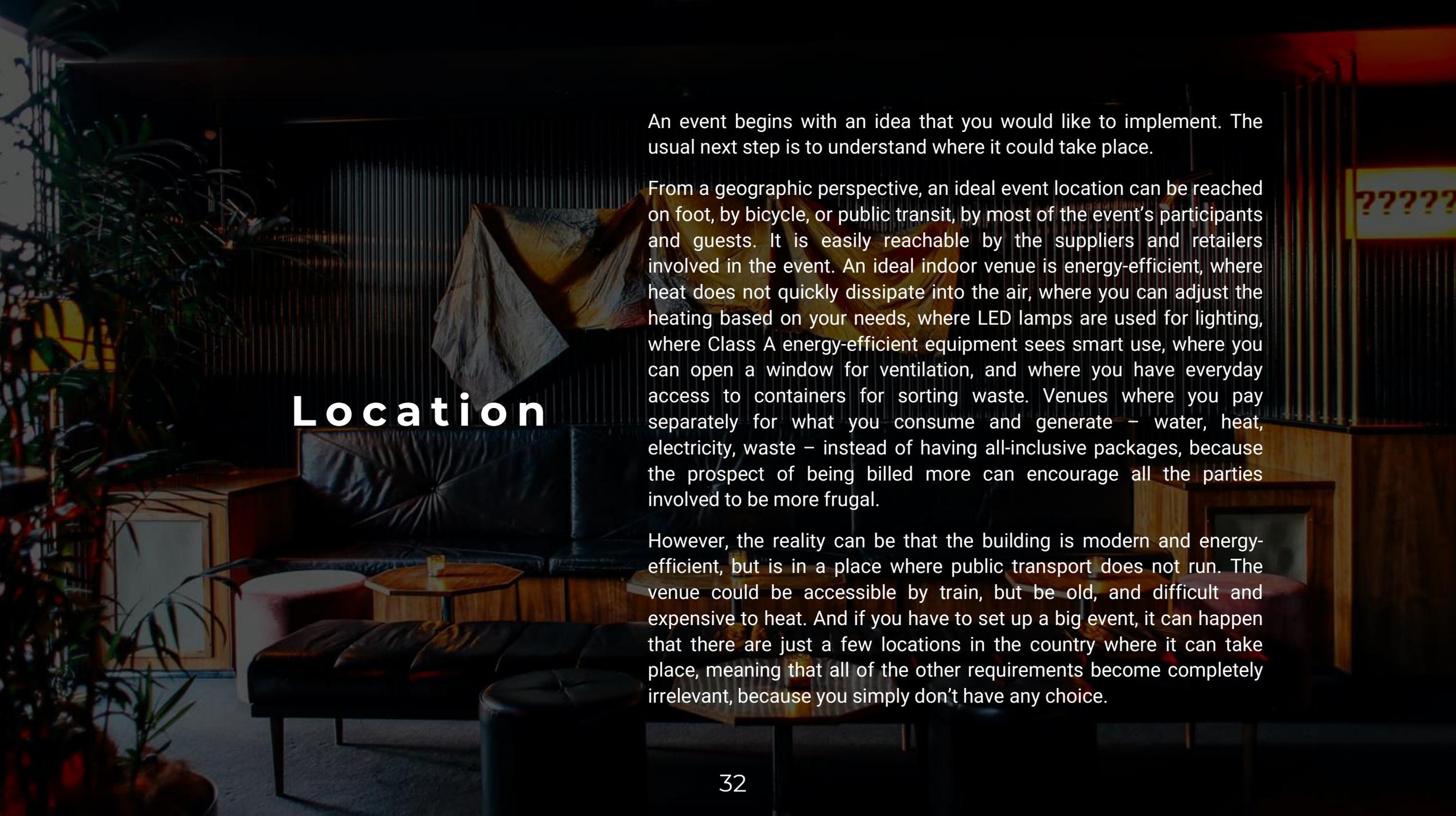
## **Use opportunities to offset CO2 emissions**

If the airline offers an option to compensate the generated CO2 with the ticket, use it: pay it and finance a project that either absorbs more CO2, or creates climate-neutral energy solutions.

## **Donate to environmental organisations**

Donate, and encourage your participants and guests as well to donate to an organisation that is working on climate issues. Indicate a specific organisation, because most potential donors will not be interested in looking for and assessing a possible recipient for their donation.

Organisations working towards environmental policies counterbalance pure business interests. It is municipal, national, and regional policies that ultimately decide the choices that we can make, and how cheap or expensive they are going to be. By supporting environmental organisations, you can support a future in which being eco-friendly is cheaper and easier. Unfortunately, today, environmental organisations have a lot of difficulty raising funds to pay the people who work on environmental protection policies, which is why it is so important to get donations.



## Location

An event begins with an idea that you would like to implement. The usual next step is to understand where it could take place.

From a geographic perspective, an ideal event location can be reached on foot, by bicycle, or public transit, by most of the event's participants and guests. It is easily reachable by the suppliers and retailers involved in the event. An ideal indoor venue is energy-efficient, where heat does not quickly dissipate into the air, where you can adjust the heating based on your needs, where LED lamps are used for lighting, where Class A energy-efficient equipment sees smart use, where you can open a window for ventilation, and where you have everyday access to containers for sorting waste. Venues where you pay separately for what you consume and generate – water, heat, electricity, waste – instead of having all-inclusive packages, because the prospect of being billed more can encourage all the parties involved to be more frugal.

However, the reality can be that the building is modern and energy-efficient, but is in a place where public transport does not run. The venue could be accessible by train, but be old, and difficult and expensive to heat. And if you have to set up a big event, it can happen that there are just a few locations in the country where it can take place, meaning that all of the other requirements become completely irrelevant, because you simply don't have any choice.

# Location

## **Choose an event location that is easily accessible by public transport**

If you choose a location that is easy to reach via public transport to begin with, you make it possible for your guests and participants to easily refrain from using private vehicles.

## **Try setting up overnight accommodations as close to the event as possible**

This will be easier for both the participants and the guests – they won't have to worry about how to get to the event, and will not create any additional CO2 emissions or traffic congestion. The organisers themselves will be able to rely on everything happening on time, because the participants will not be stuck in traffic jams. In the case of conferences, it could be the hotel itself.

## **Think if your event really will better succeed at its goals if it takes place in a protected natural area**

Sometimes with a little change in the location of the event site, or its itinerary, you can achieve its goals just as well, while avoiding damage to plants and animals.

## **Consult the environmental protection specialists of the municipality in question, or the Nature Conservation Agency**

Regardless of whether the chosen area is protected or not, dense human traffic can harm the nature there. **Make sure that the event does not do damage to plants and animals!**

## **Direct the flows of people along the existing routes**

Two people taking a walk really don't cause any appreciable harm, but hundreds and thousands going through dunes and forests can lay waste to areas with rare plants, or disturb nearby animals. Using existing paths helps reduce pressure on the local nature, and offers more safety to the guests themselves.

## **Mark the routes with visible signs (or use lights at night)**

If you do not mark the routes, people will just go the way the previous person went. If you want to direct people to existing routes, clearly indicate where they are.

## **Coordinate the event with the competent authorities**

Get permissions from the municipal government, the Nature Conservation Agency, etc. To determine if the place you have selected is protected, and if organising an event there is subject to certain restrictions, contact the institution in charge of protecting nature. In Latvia, it is the Nature Conservation Agency. Choose the office governing the region you're interested in, and clarify these issues. In any case, if organising an event in a specially protected nature territory, you need the Nature Conservation Agency's approval.

## **Burn fires only in the locations intended for them, and fully extinguish them before leaving the area**

Burning fires in a new place that has not been equipped for that changes and potentially ruins that particular natural area. In addition, existing bonfire sports are typically set up in a way to reduce the risk of a wildfire. Even if there are just a few hot embers left in a seemingly safe bonfire, wind can bring sparks and ignite nearby grass and branches, and cause a wildfire.

## **Follow the latest information about fire safety conditions in the forests**

If your event is to include a part of a forest, and it will be held during a high fire risk period, contact the State Forest Service. These specialists will tell you if you need to follow any rules for the event to be safe.

## **Make sure that toilet needs are managed in a nature-friendly way**

One person urinating somewhere in nature really won't do any harm, but tens, hundreds, or thousands of people who go to swim in a body of water, and combine it with some private business can create significant amounts of pollution, in addition to an unpleasant smell. **Use existing toilets, rent portable toilets!**

# Location

**For hikes, find out how to go to the toilet in nature in a way that causes as little harm to nature as possible, and does not bother other people enjoying nature**

It is reasonable to expect for people who spend the whole day in nature to want to go to the toilet. If you find out in advance how to do it correctly, there won't be any problems.

**Urge the guests and participants of the event not to use shampoo, soap, shower gel in bodies of water**

Letting these cleaning agents get into water is not allowed. They are a threat to the ecosystem, to plants, and to the health of the local residents.

**If you stay for the night in tents, do this in locations intended for this purpose**

**Contact the Nature Conservation Agency or the municipal government to find out where they are!** Setting up a tent camp in the wrong place creates huge pressure on the ecosystem. An example of this is tents illegally set up in the dune area on the Baltic Sea coast.



This guide has been prepared as part of the *Game On! Don't Let Climate Change End the Game* project.

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[climategame.eu](http://climategame.eu)  
[ldf@ldf.lv](mailto:ldf@ldf.lv)

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