SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CENTRE

Train-the-trainer toolkit for the introduction of environmental management in cultural organisations

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FULCRUM is an Erasmus+ project helping European socio-culture workers develop future-proof skills in the fields of environmental sustainability and community building. Discover more here.

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1. Introduction: Sustainability knowledge meets organisational development

The alarming reports from many regions of the world about merciless heatwaves, huge fires, torrential rainfall, and destructive storms make it unmistakably and brutally clear: climate protection and sustainability have become an existential challenge for the human future and therefore for us all.

The sustainable transformation of our society is progressing far too slowly to slow down climate change as much as it is necessary. What role does culture and cultural education play in the sustainable transformation of society? How can cultural institutions work together with policy makers and civil society to advance the issues of sustainability and climate protection to secure the future of society as a whole? How can we act as quickly, concretely and easily as possible?

In some countries, compliance with ecological criteria is already a factor in the cultural sector, while others are still considering it. Although many cultural institutions are not yet required to operate sustainably, EU legislation is moving in that direction. Reporting obligations, cultural funding tied to ecological practices, and the "Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD)" all

emphasize that the socio-ecological transformation impacts everyone. It is better to be prepared!

But what exactly is sustainable culture, and how can the cultural sector embrace sustainability? Every cultural institution is unique, yet certain principles of sustainability apply universally. Hosting sustainable events—whether concerts, eco-friendly clubbing, or low-carbon exhibitions—requires institutions themselves to become sustainable. Whether the focus begins with mobility, energy consumption, or procurement, the shift toward sustainability eventually touches everyone involved—employees, participants, and guests alike. Without a systematic approach, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the multitude of tasks involved in this transformation.

Sustainable Culture

Cultural events often involve significant consumption of energy, water, and materials, yet both cultural organisations and audiences are not always fully aware of this impact. This publication focuses on ecological sustainability and aims to help cultural institutions measure and systematically reduce their environmental footprint. It offers information and strategies for action in areas such as energy, water, mobility, material use, and waste management.
Additionally, many cultural organisations are unaware of how much energy and resources their activities consume, as tracking the environmental impact of cultural events can be challenging. Often, data is incomplete and must be estimated. Recognizing the importance of understanding resource and energy use, this publication also addresses methods for data collection and monitoring.

Sustainability knowledge meets organisational development

Several guidelines already exist for hosting sustainable events, along with specialized toolkits for sectors such as museums, the film industry, and theatres. These resources generally follow a common

framework: starting with a strategic approach to sustainability, they outline goals and actions to reduce resource use and carbon footprints across key areas. What needs to be done is clear; the challenge lies in how to implement it. Many cultural institutions struggle with getting started, as aligning an organisation with sustainability requires a fundamental transformation that alters its very DNA and reshapes priorities.

Introducing sustainability practices is essentially an organisational change process, and it depends on the institution's readiness to initiate internal transformations. The key term for this is **organisational development (OD)**, which refers to a planned, systematic, and long-term process of change and growth within an organisation, involving as many stakeholders as possible. OD encompasses strategy development, change management, and the deliberate handling of change processes, all aimed at fostering a targeted cultural shift

within the organisation.

How do we frame environmental sustainability and what is the specific responsibility of cultural organisations

When it comes to the environmental impact of the cultural sector, we already have a general understanding of both the scale of emissions and the areas where they are generated. Although the cultural centres' share of emissions is relatively small compared to sectors like heating, industry, transportation, and agriculture, comprehensive data is still lacking. However, preliminary assessments of individual cultural institutions reveal that visitor mobility and energy consumption in buildings account for the largest portion of their emissions. In the "Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility: Annual Report 2019 – 20" by Julie's Bicycle 53% of the overall carbon footprint has been generated by using electricity, followed by 38% for gas. However, this report does not take into consideration the mobility of visitors, but only business travel.

LINK TIP:

Culture, Climate and Environmental Responsibility: Annual Report 2019-2020

In a 2022 publication by the German Cultural Council, Carolin Baedeker, Manfred Fischedick, and Christa Liedtke emphasized that the search for solutions to the global environmental crisis highlights the urgent need to rethink habits, values, and everyday practices in both production and consumption. These shifts reflect our broader attitudes—how we approach technology, business, and life itself. They stress that the necessary social transformation cannot happen without culture. Moreover, culture holds a unique responsibility because it makes complex issues emotionally resonant and accessible to people. It creates essential spaces where sustainable practices can be developed and tested. To effectively promote sustainability in society, it is crucial that cultural institutions lead by example, operating and working in a sustainable manner themselves.

LINK TIP:

German Cultural Council publication

Sustainability action plans and ambassadors

The goal of our training and toolkit is to initiate sustainable change in socio-cultural organisations, helping them to draft and adopt environmental action plans. Trainees become sustainability ambassadors by applying their knowledge within their institutions and sharing it with peers in their networks. The main role of an ambassador is to provide accessible opportunities to engage with sustainability and to utilise the knowledge and skills gained through the FULCRUM training for this purpose.

Ambassadors should be both capable and motivated to implement and advance necessary transformation processes within their own organisations. They should also be willing to share their acquired knowledge and experiences within their regional contexts, whether through workshops, discussions, or interviews. Trainees will learn how to address the environmental aspects of cultural work and initiate sustainable management in cultural centres by being introduced to key action areas—such as energy, water, mobility, and material flow (including procurement, waste management, and recycling)—using this toolkit and training program.

RESOURCES

In order to get started with environmental action plans in your organisation, you can rely on online guides, in particular we recommend two of them:

Creative Carbon Scotland - Starting point

LINK TIP:

Creative Carbon Scotland: Starting point page

Creative Carbon Scotland is one of the leading institutions focusing on Culture's role in transforming our society to address climate change. Their website offers many useful resources: guides, case studies, reports...

Some of the content is specific to the Scottish context, however most advice is valuable also for organisations based in other countries.

The "starting point" page offers hints which are very useful for organisations that are beginning to address their environmental impacts, along with links to online tools and guides specific for different fields of action (energy, mobility, waste, water...).

LINK TIP:

Creative Carbon Scotland: Guide to measuring your travel

In particular, the "guide to measuring your travel" and the "guide to energy" will help you get an idea of the data you will need to collect in order to start assessing your impacts and plan your initial measures.

LINK TIP:

Creative Carbon Scotland: Guide to energy

Julie's Bicycle - Environmental Policy and Action Plans

LINK TIP:

Jullie's Bicycle: Environmental Policy and Action Plans

Julie's Bicycle is probably "the" pioneering organisation mobilising arts and culture for a just transition. Among the many resources, tools and best practises available on their website, the "Environmental Policy and Action Plans Overview" offers a detailed description of these two categories of documents and a guide on how to draft and

implement them.

The document also contains links to guides for the different action fields, to Julie's Bicycle Creative Climate Tools (we will reference them later, but you can start making an account and check which kind of data about your organisation are requested in order to calculate your impact) and to several examples of Environmental Policies and Action Plans from individuals and organisations of different size and complexity. Since some of the links are now broken, we will provide direct links to some of them.

LINK TIP:

Jullie's Bicycle: Creative Climate Tools

Environmental Policies and Action Plans - Some examples

Gate Theatre: Gate Theatre is a relatively small cultural organisation which has incorporated sustainability and climate action in its policies and plans since 2015; the document accessible at the link incorporates both its Environmental Policy, which references international agreements on climate and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and its Action Plan with clear and time-bound targets in the fields of energy, water and waste.

Ninja Tune: Ninja Tune is an independent record label; the webpage at the link describes their policy and their actions, together with reports of their carbon footprint.

Art By The Sea Festival: an important festival based in Bournemouth, UK, they have developed both a Sustainability Policy and a Sustainability Action Plan, whose goals are connected to UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre: this cultural centre in Australia has a comprehensive environmental strategy, which once again references the UN Sustainable Development Goals, connecting global and local issues, with an extensive list of commitments and targets complete with Key Performance Indicators (KPI), timelines and staff members responsible for each action.

Open Cultural Centre: while not a typical cultural centre (but very much in line with the ENCC concept of Socio-Culture) this non for profit organisation that provide cultural accessibility for migrant communities in Spain and Greece has developed an interesting and complete Environmental Sustainability Plan.

2. The training concept

2.1 Goals and principles

The goal of the training is to equip cultural professionals with the skills to create climate-friendly cultural activities and reduce their organisation's ecological footprint by implementing an environmental action plan. This toolkit outlines the training concept and process, provides key information on environmental management for cultural professionals, and includes references for further reading, along with links to existing resources and tools.

In most cases, it is not a lack of awareness or access to information on sustainability that holds cultural professionals back from taking action. Instead, many are unsure of how to systematically approach the process of change. This is why the training program emphasizes the transformation process, with a particular focus on how to initiate it.

Training goals:

- Participants will gain an understanding of the connections between cultural work and ecology.
- They will recognise that implementing environmental management is a process of organisational development.
- They will learn to differentiate between purpose, goal, and activ-

ity, and with expert guidance, develop an environmental action plan for a socio-cultural centre.

- Participants will grasp the concept of environmental management, key areas of focus, and related activities.

- They will learn how to measure their environmental impact and explore effective approaches to reducing their ecological footprint.

- Participants will meet, exchange ideas, and collaborate with colleagues from cultural institutions across Europe who, like them, are committed to becoming sustainability ambassadors within their networks and communities.

The training follows the following principles:

- **Peer-to-peer learning:** trainers provide a framework for collaborative learning, where not only the trainers but all participants contribute their expertise. Successful learning hinges on fostering an open environment that encourages everyone to share their knowledge. Practical experimentation, both individually and in groups, is a key aspect of the approach. The success of the learning process also depends on how effectively teams collaborate.

- **Iterative workshop series:** the programme consists of seven interactive workshops. The initial sessions are held in person, while the subsequent ones are conducted online.

- **Diverse perspectives:** each workshop integrates specialised environmental knowledge with organisational development themes and practical implementation strategies.

- **Learning by doing:** from the outset, participants apply what they've learned, developing an environmental action plan for a specific cultural organisation.

- **Exchange and networking:** Participants share experiences and engage in peer-to-peer consultation, fostering mutual support and learning.

Learning for sustainability: this toolkit aims to cultivate a sustainability mindset, recognising that humans are part of and dependent on nature. The training programme outlined in the toolkit is both knowledge-based and skills-based; it takes into consideration the publication "GreenComp: The European sustainability competence framework". Learners acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to become agents of change, contributing individually and collectively to shaping a future that respects the planet's ecological limits.

LINK TIP:

GreenComp: The European sustainability competence framework

2.2 Elements of the training series

Initial Workshop in Turin

The training begins with a 2.5-day in-person workshop in Turin. Participants will receive an overview of the entire series and have the opportunity to get to know one another. This workshop lays the foundation for the rest of the course, which will be conducted online.

Online Workshops

The online workshops are structured as two 2-hour sessions with a 1-hour break in between. Each session addresses two key perspectives: environmental management and organisational development. The format combines presentations with practical exercises, drawing on participants' examples and experiences. The central focus is: How can environmental measures be integrated into an organisation's structure?

Homework in National Teams

Participants will have a two-month break between training sessions to complete a practical exercise in their teams, consisting of 2-4 individuals from one FULCRUM network partner. These teams, formed during the initial workshop, will develop an environmental action plan for (at least) one cultural organisation of their choice. This exercise will serve as a guiding thread throughout the series and will involve the following tasks:

- Developing a vision, objectives, and initial measures
- Drafting a change process
- Creating and prioritising actions in one or more key areas
- Calculating the carbon footprint (where data availability makes it possible)
- Reflecting on and providing recommendations for the cultural organisation

Intermediate Meetings (Online)

Between training sessions, the trainers will offer an online meeting, featuring a brief presentation on a relevant question or issue that arises during the training, followed by a Q&A session. This will give teams an opportunity to receive feedback on their strategy processes. The meeting will also provide a space for the entire group to share experiences and insights.

2.3 Training plan outline

	Title/Issue	Learning steps	Duration
1	Introduction to the workshop concept, key terms, objectives	• Introduction and getting to know each other • Overview of the workshop series, learning objectives, and the ambassador concept • Introduction to key terms related to environmental sustainability • Overview of environmental management • Introduction to organisational development and change management • Planning for the workshop series, including team formation and self-organisation	2,5 days in Turin 14-16.10.2024
	Homework	The teams will select at least one cultural institution to work with throughout the workshop series, to design an environmental action plan. They will gather relevant information about the institution and conduct an interview with its board of directors or leadership team to plan the support process.	

2	Introduction of strategic planning: Sharing of vision, goals, and policy Field of action: energy	• Participants will understand the connection between vision, goals, guidelines, and action planning. • Participants will gain an overview of the environmental impacts of energy use in a socio-cultural organisation, including how to monitor and reduce them.	Online WS: 2 x 2 h 17.12.2024
	Homework	The teams will develop a vision, objectives, and initial measures for one environmental area of focus within their chosen organisations. To support this process, they will be provided with a list of available online resources, guidelines, and case studies.	
3	Getting started, change processes Field of action: water	• Participants will explore Kotter's change model. • They will learn how change processes are initiated and managed within organisations. • In-depth focus on water management.	Online WS: 2 x 2 h 19.2.2025
	Homework	Teams will draft a change process for their organisations, using insights from the online sessions and available resources. They will focus on key questions, such as how to initiate the process, what the first steps should be, and who should be involved at each stage	

4	Identifying and Planning measures Field of action: Mobility	• Participants will learn how to plan and prioritise measures across various environmental areas. • In-depth focus on mobility management.	Online WS: 2 x 2 h 10.4.2025
	Homework	Teams will plan measures aligned with their vision and objectives in three fields of action. They will prioritise these measures based on effectiveness and feasibility	
5	Collecting data, carbon footprint Field of action: material flows, purchasing	• Participants will learn how to calculate a carbon footprint and gather data for the monitoring process. • In-depth focus on material flows and procurement.	Online WS: 2 x 2 h 28.5.2025
	Homework	Teams will calculate at least Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions for their cultural institutions, gathering the necessary data and using one of the calculators available online and presented during the workshop.	
6	Monitoring and communication Field of action: material flows, waste management	• Participants will be able to design a simple monitoring system. • Participants will learn how to effectively communicate about sustainability practices. In-depth focus on waste management and circular economy	Online WS: 2 x 2 h 26.6.2025

		Preparation of final outputs	
7	Summary and reflection The role of ambassador	• Participants will reflect on what they have learned and present the outcomes of their work. • They will also reflect on their role as ambassadors. • Finally, they will evaluate the training programme.	Online WS: 2 x 2 h 24.9.2025

3. Initiating and engaging in organisational change processes

We already know what we need to about the causes and consequences of our actions. What we struggle with is how to break free from our routines and habits. Several challenges arise:

The complexity of the issue can quickly become overwhelming. If everything is interconnected, how do I make the right decision?

Climate change is a global phenomenon with local impacts. What role can cultural centres play, and within what framework can they act?

The influence of each cultural institution is small, and resources are limited. How can I stay motivated, and motivate my team, even when our impact seems insignificant?

3.1 Organisational development

Anyone who has worked on sustainability measures in a cultural institution quickly realises there are numerous potential actions, and it can be difficult to maintain a clear focus. Questions like "Which measures are most effective?" and "How do I set priorities?" often arise. Should a cultural festival encourage participants to travel by bus or train? Should a youth club address climate protection issues? Or should a cultural centre incorporate climate protection into its statutes? These examples reflect different approaches to sustainability and climate action, while also touching on the organisational processes and structures themselves. This is unsurprising, as sustainability measures impact all areas of an organisation that consume materials and energy.

To achieve lasting change, organisations must adjust their structures and processes to function with significantly fewer resources. Therefore, this training programme focuses not only on technical knowledge about energy saving, material flows, and water conservation but also on the organisational processes required to operate more sustainably. Organisational development (OD) plays a key role in systematically incorporating sustainability within an organisation's sphere of influence. OD supports the people who are involved in socio-cultural centres and make decisions on a daily basis. It addresses topics like volunteer engagement and motivation, improving board-level work processes, determining the most effective communication channels (letters, phone calls, emails, WhatsApp, etc.), and how associations or networks can better achieve their goals. OD also considers external factors that may initially seem unrelated to the organisation's core mission but can have long-term impacts on its work.

Unlike traditional management consulting, which offers solutions based on external expertise, organisational development focuses

on generating solutions from within the organisation. In this sense, OD can be likened to coaching for organisations, with the process tailored to the organisation's unique situation. Figure 1 outlines the different areas involved.

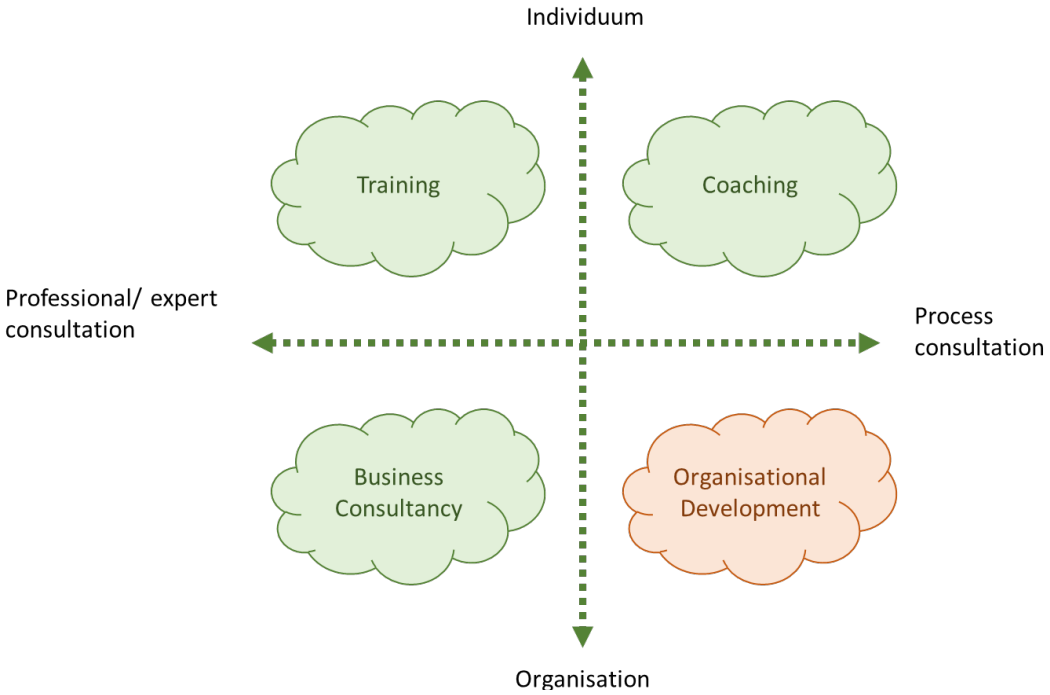


Figure 1: Own illustration based on the concept of "denkmod-ell" (www.denkmod-ell.de)

Organisational Development (OD) helps to introduce sustainability management by structurally and systematically aligning all areas of an organisation with sustainability principles. The following diagram illustrates the necessary steps in sustainability management and how they build on each other in a cyclical process.

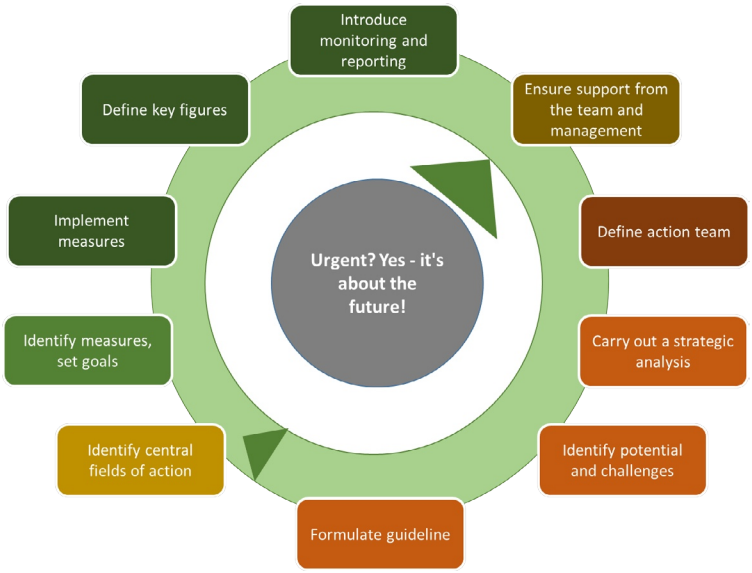


Figure 2: the sustainability management cycle. Own figure, Bundesverband Soziokultur (www.soziokultur.de)

Step 1: Secure support from staff and the management team

A commitment from the management team is crucial for success. The management must have a clear understanding of the upcoming process and be able to estimate the resources required.

Step 2: Define an action team

An action team is responsible for planning and overseeing the process. In larger institutions, this team may include representatives from various departments. It is essential that the team has a clearly defined mandate and access to sufficient resources.

Steps 3-5: Strategic analysis, identifying potentials and challenges, and establishing guidelines

A strategic analysis is conducted to identify challenges, opportunities, and define the framework for action. Questions such as: Why does our organisation exist? What resources do we use? What are our goals? What opportunities and risks do we foresee? should be addressed by the team. The findings can be summarised in a SWOT matrix, leading to the development of an overarching mission statement and guiding principles, which can then be formalised into a sustainability strategy for the organisation.

SWOT Analysis Procedure:

1. Identify the focus of the SWOT analysis (e.g., the organisation's positioning regarding sustainability).

2. Start by identifying strengths and weaknesses, initially focusing on internal aspects. Then consider external perspectives, such as those of your audience and funders. Use the guiding questions within each quadrant to facilitate discussion. Identify and prioritise the most influential strengths and weaknesses.

3. Translate external changes into the main opportunities and threats that the organisation is likely to face in the future. Enter these into the respective fields (opportunities and threats).

Strengths	Weaknesses
• What is going well? • What are the key factors behind your past successes? • What achievements are you most proud of? • Why do people choose to engage with your organisation? • What makes your offering stand out?Which core competencies and resources contribute to your success? • What do you excel at, possibly even more than other organisations? • Do you possess unique information, specialised knowledge, or exceptional access to your audience?	• What is not going well? • What factors contributed to your past failures? • What areas do you struggle with (or feel you do not excel in)? • Why is your audience no longer engaging with you or choosing alternative options? • What aspects of your offering are lacking or outdated? • In what ways do other cultural institutions outperform you?

Opportunities	Threats
• Where do you see opportunities for your organisation? • Which trends and changes in the environment play into your hands? • Which trends and environmental changes offer you completely new opportunities? • Which (environmental) issues can you address? • Which developments, networks and offers can you take advantage of? • Which new players can you work with?	• What factors are jeopardising your current funding model? • Which trends and environmental changes threaten the sustainability of your organisation? • What is the extent of the risk posed by unforeseen influences? • What factors threaten your objectives? • How are the funding conditions evolving? • In what ways is the political landscape for art and culture shifting?

Based on the mission statement and the SWOT analysis, the organisation formulates goals for sustainability.

Understanding the difference between vision and goals – and the meaning of both

"If you want to build a ship, don't get everyone together to get wood and prepare tools or to divide up the work and assign tasks, but teach them to long for the endless sea."

Visions and missions have the function of motivation and guidance. They can build the background for setting goals. The following table shows the differences between vision and goals:

Vision: I have a dream	Goals: I have a plan
Looking towards the future	Rooted to the present
Describes the organisation's long-term purpose and aspirations	Short- to medium-term and more detailed than the vision
Idealistic	Realistic
Broad and overarching, focusing on the "why" behind the organisation's existence	Focus on the "what" and "how" aspects of the organisation's strategy.
Inspires and motivates by painting an ambitious picture of success.	SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)
Often remains stable over time, offering continuity and direction.	Flexible and adaptable, updated as the organisation progresses and responds to changes.

In the sustainability strategy both elements should be included and linked to each other. The vision inspires the environmental policy document of the organisation, while the goals form part of the action plan.

Step 6: Fields of Action

To systematically address the broad scope of environmental sustainability, it is advisable to divide it into distinct fields of action. These fields can be based on environmental factors, such as energy, water, material flows, waste, and mobility. Additionally, they should align with organisational structures, like procurement, facility management, programme planning, and catering, as well as associated roles and responsibilities. Clear accountability should be assigned for each field of action. Furthermore, overall goals, clearly linked to these fields, should be formulated within the organisation's sustainability strategy (Step 5).

Steps 7 and 8: Planning and Implementation of Measures

The sustainability team develops an environmental action plan for each field of action. This plan builds on the environmental policy and outlines the specific steps the organisation will take to achieve its goals in the various fields of action. The team begins by brainstorming potential measures in a workshop setting, covering all fields of action. Next, they evaluate these measures based on factors such as effort (costs, time) and impact. The measures can then be organised into a matrix (see figure 3).

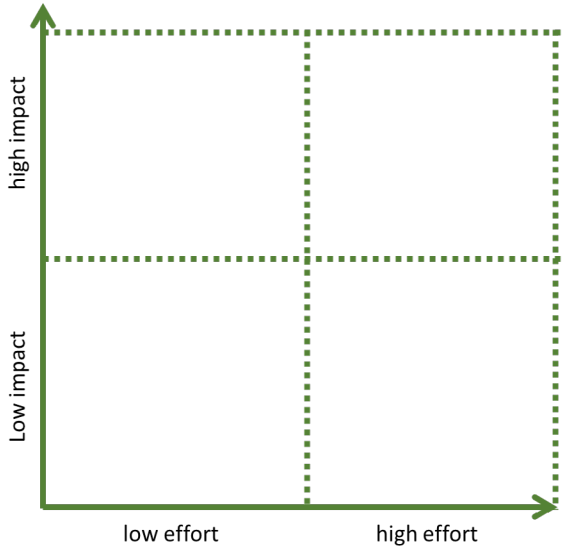


Figure 3: essentiality matrix, own illustration

The matrix facilitates the prioritisation of measures. Subsequently, the action team develops an action plan for each field. This plan should empower the responsible individuals to act. Therefore, it should include timelines, budgets, responsibilities, and the names of those involved, consulted, or informed, as well as a section for tracking the implementation status of each measure.

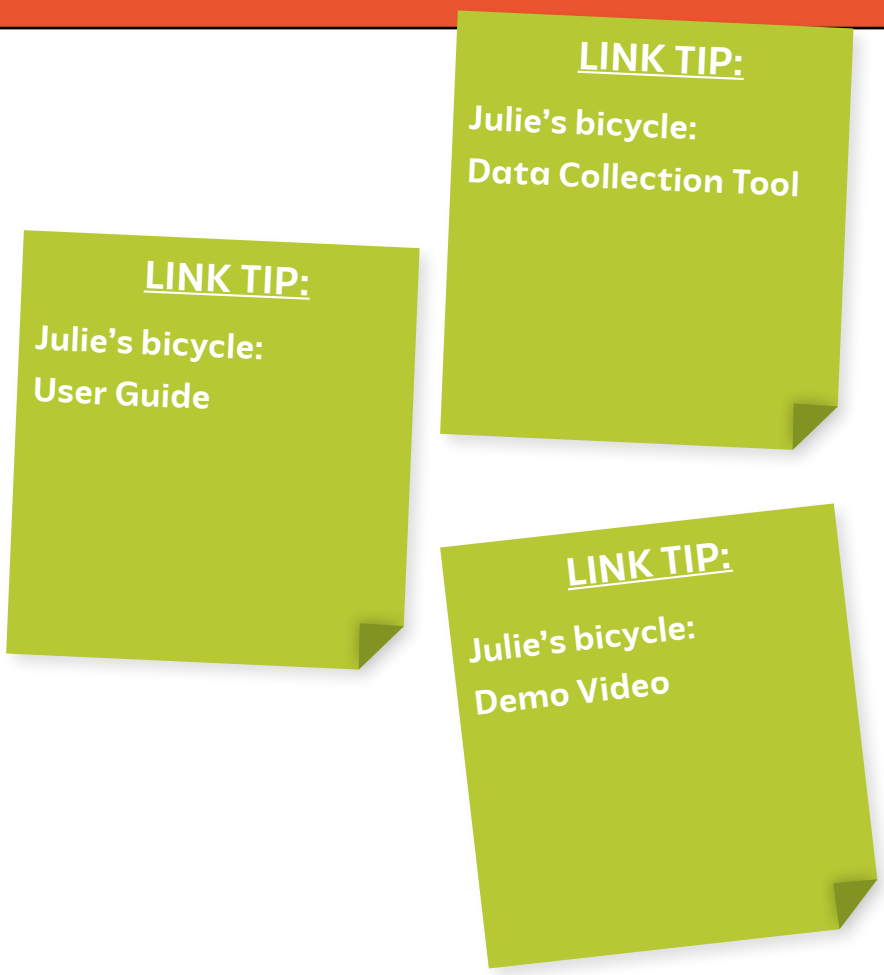
The overview document, "Environmental Policy and Action Plans" from Julie's Bicycle, provides essential tips and an overview of frequently used terms (see page 15).

Steps 9 and 10: Key Figures and Monitoring

Adhering to the principle that "you can only manage what you measure," a robust action plan includes evaluation criteria for each measure to determine whether they have been implemented or achieved. Establishing a solid baseline is crucial for this process. The organisation should assess what has already been accomplished across the various fields of action. Many organisations begin by evaluating their institutional carbon footprint (see box below). However, the goal is to create an overview of the organisation's sustainability performance. Examples can be found in the "**environmental action plan template**" (see page 16). For instance, to monitor the implementation of a waste management system, the organisation must track the volume of waste over time. Similarly, to measure the effectiveness of water-saving technologies, the total water usage must be monitored over a given period. In many instances, necessary data can be easily obtained, such as energy consumption from electricity bills and meter readings. However, in cases like waste management, the organisation must establish its own measurement system, for example, by counting garbage bins and assessing their volume on a weekly or monthly basis.

Measurement of carbon footprint

We must significantly reduce our emissions of climate-damaging gases. To achieve this, we need to identify where to begin and pinpoint the most impactful leverage points. The carbon footprint offers insight into the current climate impact of an organisation and serves as an excellent starting point for planning climate protection initiatives. While a sustainability management system can be effective without a carbon footprint, integrating the carbon footprint into sustainability efforts is highly recommended. The primary objective of calculating a carbon footprint is to identify all processes within an organisation, activity, or event that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Various assessment tools and guidance materials are available to assist with this task, so we will not delve into the details here but instead refer you to those resources:



Reporting and communication

The final element of the sustainability cycle is reporting. Why is it essential to report on your organisation's sustainability activities, and what constitutes a good report? There are numerous approaches and frameworks available, most notably the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which establishes a widely accepted standard. However, many small cultural institutions perceive the reporting requirements of these standards as demanding. To begin, reports should be concise, straightforward, and focused on organisational reflection and learning. Reporting on sustainability offers several benefits:

- **"Do good and talk about it":** clearly articulating accomplishments and making them visible not only motivates your team but can also inspire others.

- **Solidifying your sustainability mission:** a sustainability mission statement becomes tangible when it demonstrates what your organisation stands for and the measures it has implemented.

- **Identifying challenges and limitations:** the scope for action is often limited, particularly in the cultural sector. Discussing challenges and obstacles can be beneficial for both your organisation and others, fostering transparency that invites exchange and networking.

- **Facilitating learning through reporting:** reflecting on goals, activities, and achievements, and considering areas for improvement, should be central to every report.

A clear action plan, baseline information, and monitoring results form the foundation for effective reporting. Regular reporting—such as annually—on where your organisation began and what it achieved during the reporting period, alongside well-documented activities, is crucial. Reports should be simple, transparent (including

the disclosure of challenges and mistakes), reflective, and succinct.

Reporting also enables to adjust the action plan and start again from step 7 in an iterative improvement process known as PDCA cycle: Plan, Do, Check, Adjust (or Act).

3.2 The role of stakeholders and how to integrate them

In socio-cultural settings, the focus is not so much on *culture for the people* as on *culture with the people*, which highlights the crucial role of stakeholders. Stakeholders encompass all groups connected to the socio-cultural centre—whether as visitors, employees, volunteers, members of the community who provide the space, or artists given the platform to perform.

The diagram below illustrates the various stakeholder groups. It also serves as a useful exercise for organisations to map out their stakeholders. The size of each circle represents the importance or influence of the group, while the distance from the organisation indicates the closeness of their relationship. You can draw inner and outer circles to distinguish levels of influence, with dotted lines representing indirect involvement and solid lines indicating active engagement.

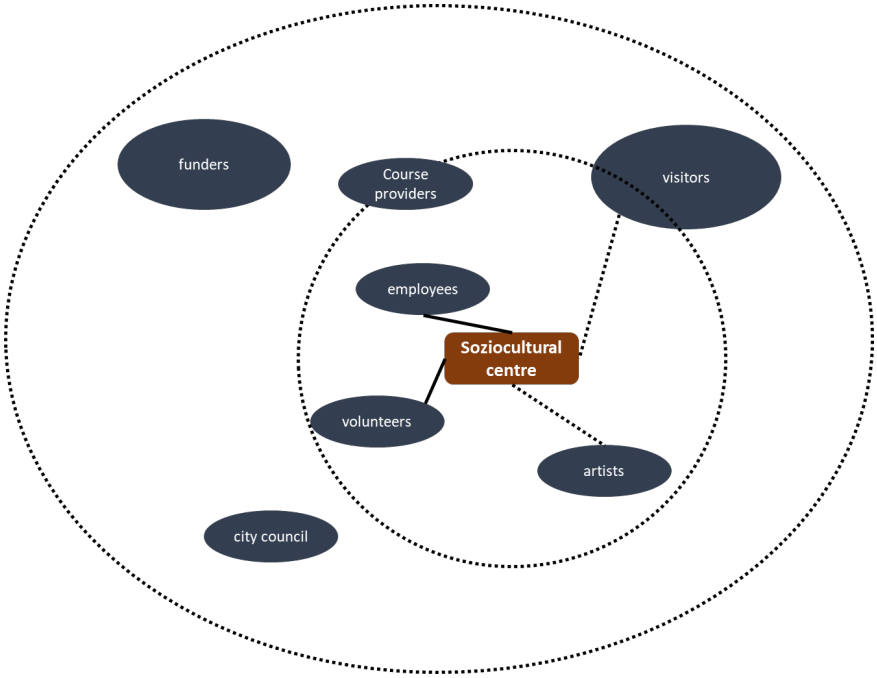


Figure 4: stakeholder diagram (own illustration)

The exercise of creating a diagram, as shown in Figure 3, helps pro-

vide an overview of the relevant groups connected to the cultural centre. To effectively integrate the different stakeholders, it is essential to clarify their expectations, roles, and opportunities to engage with or contribute to the organisation. The following questions may guide you in this process:

- Who are the various groups, and how can we identify them?

- What do they expect from the organisation (or a specific project), and what does the organisation expect from them?

- What roles or functions do they serve for the organisation or a particular project?

The user-centred design approach offers a systematic process for developing tailored offerings for different stakeholder groups. It is based on the idea that future users of a product should be involved in its development as early as possible. The fundamental principles and process can be adapted for the work of socio-cultural centres.

The main principle of human-centred design is that it focuses on understanding users, their expectations, and their environment. This perspective can be applied to each group connected to the centre. Users are involved in the development of cultural offerings, and the design is shaped through a user-centred evaluation. The design process is iterative, involving multiple stages of consultation, development, testing, and evaluation.

Process

1. **Specification of Context and Users:** the process begins by identifying the users of the product (or cultural production), determining who they are, why they will use it, what their requirements are, and the environment in which they will engage with it.

2. **Specification of Requirements:** What are the requirements for the

product or cultural production? What purpose should it fulfil, and what will make it successful? In this phase, it is useful to involve potential users directly (or visitors to the cultural production). Alternatively, you could create a "persona" to put yourself in their shoes, characterising them as accurately as possible. Imagine the person's life situation (e.g. profession, lifestyle, hobbies), and consider what role the socio-cultural centre might play from this perspective.

3. **Design Solutions and Development:** Based on the project's goals and requirements, begin an iterative process of design and development. The key principle here is that the potential target group is not only involved at the end of the production or development process but is also consulted for feedback on ideas and initial concepts throughout.

4. **Evaluation of Product:** Reflecting on how well the design meets user needs and expectations is a core aspect of human-centred design. The iterative process also applies to the overall development: feedback is used not only to refine solutions but also to reassess needs and potentially adjust the context for use. This is represented by the light grey dotted arrows in the diagram, which show that interim evaluations ask questions about both context and needs.

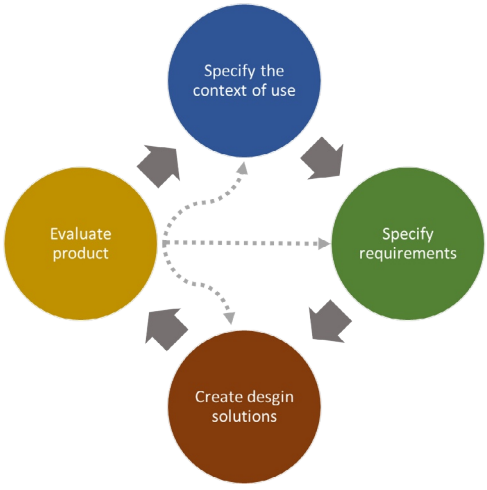


Figure 5: user centred design approach (own illustration)

4. Energy

Oil-soaked seabirds on once-pristine beaches; glaciers melting at the poles and atop our mountains; communities displaced, and natural and cultural heritage destroyed by the construction of colossal dams; regions suffering unprecedented droughts while others endure extreme flooding; rainforests, rich with irreplaceable biodiversity, scarred by mining operations searching for rare minerals essential to battery production; city skies polluted with harmful gases and particles.

These harrowing images are the direct and indirect consequences of energy production, transportation, and consumption.

Energy production, transport and use have indeed a huge impact on the environment and on our health, in different impact categories:

- **Air pollution** (i.e: gas and particles deriving from burning fuels)
- **Climate change** (i.e: CO2 emissions from combustion of fossil fuels)
- **Water pollution and alteration of aquatic ecosystems** (i.e: oil spills, drilling, nuclear accidents, hydroelectric plants)
- **Land use** (i.e: crops planted specifically for producing biofuels, solar plants on agricultural land)
- **Pollution from the extraction of raw materials** (i.e: for batteries, solar panels, oil extraction)

Since virtually everything we do relies on energy, avoiding these im-

pacts could seem like an insurmountable challenge.

Addressing this challenge is undeniably immense, but there is much each of us can do to support the transition to more sustainable ways of producing and using energy. This endeavour demands innovation, creativity, motivation, awareness, and knowledge.

While it might be tempting to assume this responsibility lies solely with engineers and policymakers, it is vital for every citizen to contribute. As cultural workers, we have a unique role to play: after all, innovation, creativity, and knowledge are fundamental tools of our profession.

The first step in addressing any issue is to understand it. While it is beyond the scope of this toolkit to provide a comprehensive analysis of global energy production, consumption, and their ecological impacts, we aim to direct you to reliable resources available online.

Data on World and EU energy:

IEA, International Energy Agency **https://www.iea.org/**

IRENA, International Renewable Energy Agency **https://www.irena.org/**

European Commission, EUROSTAT Energy statistics, an overview **https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Energy_statistics_-_an_overview**

Energy Institute, Statistical review of world energy **https://www.energyinst.org/statistical-review**

European Environmental Agency, EEA, **https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/energy**

On the environmental and health impacts of the energy system:

LINK TIP:
World Energy Outlook Special Report

World Energy Outlook Special Report 2016: Energy and Air Pollution.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

LINK TIP:
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

A preprint discussing the climate and health impacts of energy consumption, particularly in relation to EU policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

LINK TIP:
Preprint discussing the climate and health impacts of energy consumption

4.1 Assessing the baseline

In this chapter, we will concentrate on the energy used in your socio-cultural centre for heating, cooling, lighting, and operating devices. Energy related to mobility, as well as the production, transport, and disposal of goods, materials, and waste, will be covered in subsequent chapters.

The initial step is to gain a clear understanding of your energy consumption. While advanced systems for detailed energy monitoring are available, they often require a financial investment in technology. However, a basic assessment of overall energy usage can be con-

ducted simply by reviewing your energy bills.

If your organisation receives and pays the energy bills directly, you are likely already tracking your energy costs. To determine your energy consumption, examine the units of energy recorded, typically measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh) for electricity, cubic metres (m^3) for gas, litres of oil, or kWh for heat if you use electric heating. It is also important to review historical data; many utility providers supply usage histories, enabling you to compare your current consumption with previous months or years.

Another valuable detail to look for in your electricity bills or on your supplier's website is the fuel mix — the sources of energy used to generate the electricity provided to you. By understanding how much electricity you consume and where it originates, you can better assess its environmental impacts.

4.1.1 Understanding your electricity consumption

To gain a deeper understanding of which devices consume the most electricity, you can use either direct or indirect methods.

- **Direct Measurement:** to measure electricity usage in real time, energy meters and smart plugs are effective tools. These devices are widely available and often affordable. Their operation is straightforward: plug the energy meter into the mains, then connect the device you wish to monitor to the energy meter. The meter will display the power consumption in watts (W), which represents the energy the device uses per second, as well as the total energy consumed over a period of time.

- **Indirect Measurement: y**ou can also estimate energy consumption indirectly by referring to your equipment's technical data sheets, energy labels, or certificates. By multiplying the device's power rating (in watts, W) by the number of hours it is in use, and then dividing the result by 1,000, you can calculate its energy con-

sumption in kilowatt-hours (kWh).

Both approaches can help identify the most energy-intensive equipment in your organisation and inform targeted efficiency improvements.

4.1.2 Understanding the Heating Performance of Your Building

Heating is likely the most energy-intensive activity in your centre. When we heat our buildings during winter, we aim to maintain an indoor temperature higher than the outdoor temperature. Unfortunately, when two bodies at different temperatures are in contact, heat naturally flows from the warmer body to the cooler one. As a result, a significant portion of the energy and resources used to produce heat is ultimately lost to the environment.

The energy efficiency of a building depends not only on the efficiency of its heating system in converting energy sources into heat but also on how well the building is insulated.

Your heating energy bills can provide a direct measure of the energy consumed annually for heating. This consumption is influenced by the building's efficiency, local climatic conditions, and the behaviour of its occupants. An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), however, offers a more standardised assessment of your building's efficiency, indicating how much energy is required per square metre under standard conditions.

EPCs often include recommendations for improving a building's energy efficiency.

If you do not have an EPC for your building, you can request one from your landlord. In some countries, it is a legal requirement to include the certificate with rental contracts.

In addition to collecting quantitative data, it is equally important to gather qualitative data through surveys and questionnaires. Understanding your centre's energy performance from the perspective of its users can provide valuable insights. For example, users may highlight specific issues, such as rooms or halls that feel too warm or too cold, draughts from windows, or other inefficiencies in the building's insulation. This feedback can help identify areas for improvement that may not be immediately apparent through numerical data alone.

4.2 Key people

The individuals you need to involve in addressing energy-related issues will depend on your organisation's structure and your centre's circumstances, such as whether you own, rent, or sub-let your premises.

To identify the key people at various levels, consider the following guiding questions:

- **Who makes decisions about building maintenance and renovations?** Is there an energy manager or facility manager?
- **Who decides on the purchase of equipment and devices?**
- **Who is responsible for day-to-day maintenance operations?**
- **Who oversees community engagement and communication?** This is important for educating and involving the community, promoting energy-saving behaviours, and gathering feedback.
- **Who are the main stakeholders, and what is their position on energy efficiency?**

By answering these questions, you can ensure that the right individuals are onboarded to effectively address energy-related challenges.

4.3. Plan your strategy and actions

Once you have a comprehensive understanding of your centre's energy usage and have identified and engaged the key stakeholders, it is time to develop your action plan.

Drawing on the principles discussed in Chapter 3.1 regarding setting S.M.A.R.T. objectives, monitoring and reporting, and the PDCA cycle, you can consider the following list of potential actions. These vary in terms of the effort required and the level of economic investment needed.

4.3.1 Measures to reduce the environmental footprint of heating and cooling

- **Optimise room temperature: s**et room temperatures to the lowest comfortable level in winter and the highest comfortable level in summer, while wearing season-appropriate clothing. For example, it is more sustainable to wear a sweater and keep the heating lower in winter than to raise the temperature and wear a T-shirt. As mentioned earlier, when two bodies are in contact, energy naturally flows from the body with a higher temperature to the one with a lower temperature. The rate at which heat escapes from your building during winter is directly proportional to the temperature difference between the inside and the outside. For example, if the indoor temperature is 8°C higher than the outdoor temperature, heat will leave the building at twice the rate it would if the temperature difference were only 4°C. In some countries, regulations stipulate minimum and maximum indoor temperatures during the winter months, helping to balance comfort

and energy efficiency.

- **Adjust temperatures based on usage: i**f your system allows different temperatures in different rooms, regulate temperatures according to their use and occupancy. For radiator-based heating systems, utilise thermostatic valves where available to control room temperatures effectively. Ensure these valves are well-maintained, and if your system lacks them, consider installing them.

- **Eliminate draughts: i**dentify and address air drafts. If replacing windows is not feasible, use traditional or DIY draught stoppers to seal gaps and improve thermal efficiency.

- **Prioritise insulation in renovations: i**f renovation is an option, focus on enhancing insulation as a priority. **The most sustainable energy is the energy you don't use**, and a good insulation will make sure you will not waste energy.

4.3.2 Measures to reduce the environmental footprint of equipment and lighting

- **Promote energy-conscious behaviour**: Start by informing your team and audience about the importance of using energy sparingly and adopting energy-saving habits.

- **Ensure devices are switched off**: verify that all devices are turned off when not in use. Power strips with toggle switches can make this process easier and more effective.

- **Choose energy-efficient devices**: for certain product categories the European Energy Label will help you select the most energy efficient; for other product categories, opt for equipment with recognised certifications, such as Energy Star, or EPEAT. If no certification is available, review the technical specifications and select devices that perform the same task using the least power (measured in Watts, W).

- **Monitor device energy consumption**: if you suspect a device is consuming excessive energy, use energy meters to measure its usage. If the energy consumption is too high, consider replacing the device. Compare the current device's energy usage with that of newer, more efficient alternatives to calculate the potential return on investment.

- **Maximise the use of natural light.**

- **LED lightbulbs** produce the same light using a fraction of the energy required by incandescent and fluorescent bulbs; they also have a longer lifespan.

- **Install motion and natural light sensors** where they can produce significant savings.

4.3.3 Measures to reduce the environmental footprint of the electricity you use

- **Purchase 100% renewable electricity**: Choose electricity contracts that guarantee 100% renewable energy.

  › It is preferable to buy from suppliers who exclusively sell renewable energy rather than those offering both renewable and non-renewable options. This supports companies more actively engaged in promoting renewable energy.

  › **Select suppliers with direct investments**: opt for energy providers that invest directly in renewable energy generation facilities rather than those simply purchasing renewable energy from third parties. Ensure your supplier provides renewable guarantees of origin for all the energy they sell.

  › **Look for sustainability labels**: In some countries, labels certify sustainable energy. Investigate whether there are offers that allow you to select specific renewable energy generation

plants. This ensures not only the renewable origin of the energy but also its overall sustainability: while renewable energy sources are generally climate-neutral, they can have other environmental impacts. For example, biofuel production may affect land use and release harmful substances during combustion, hydroelectric plants can disrupt aquatic ecosystems, the extraction of raw materials for solar panels and batteries can cause pollution.

- **Consider local renewable energy generation**: Explore the possibility of producing renewable energy on-site at your centre. Alternatively, you could join or establish a renewable energy community to contribute actively to sustainable energy generation.

RESOURCES

There are several resources available online that can help you design and implement your energy strategy and action plan:

- The environmental action plans you can find in the resource chapter all have actions in the energy field;
- Julie's Bicycle Greening the Office Guide has a chapter on energy and contains examples and links to further reading and resources;
- The Theatre Green Book, although targeted to venues quite different from our socio-cultural centres, has extensive resources for buildings' sustainable management and retrofitting

LINK TIP:
The Theatre Green Book

- Julie's Bicycle also has a Net Zero Building programme, accessible here

LINK TIP:
Julie's bicycle: Net Zero Building programme

- The UfaFabrik cultural centre in Berlin has a long story of sustainability initiatives and energy efficient solutions:
- The Potemkin and Golinsky palace in Krichev has installed smart heating system and replaced an old boiler with a new, energy efficient model.

LINK TIP:
UfaFabrik cultural centre

- Renewable Energy Communities have been introduced by the European Union to help citizens to become prosumers (producers – consumers) of renewable energy; you can find more information here. Each member country has adopted or is adopting specific legislation to implement Renewable Energy Communities. How do they work in your country?

- If you want to better understand the overall environmental sustainability of different renewable energy sources, you can find more information here and here.

- The FULCRUM self assessment tool has examples of measures to be implemented in order to achieve a 100% score in energy management, that could be inspirational for your energy action plan.

LINK TIP:

FULCRUM self-assessment tool

5. Water

Water is a vital resource essential for life, yet its availability is increasingly under threat due to population growth, climate change, and unsustainable usage. The importance of sustainable water use cannot be overstated, as it ensures the long-term health of ecosystems, supports economic development, and maintains human well-being.

Approximately half of the world's population currently experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year. While your socio-cultural centre may not be situated in a region typically affected by water shortages, climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events, including droughts, even in areas that were previously unaffected.

Various human activities have a significant impact on water resources, influencing both their quality and availability. Agriculture is the largest consumer of freshwater, accounting for approximately 70% of global usage, primarily for irrigation. This is followed by industry, which consumes around 19% (including mining, energy production, and manufacturing), and domestic or municipal use at approximately 11%, encompassing drinking water, sanitation, and other essential needs.

Beyond the direct use of freshwater, numerous activities impact the water cycle and the quality of aquatic ecosystems. Pollution—such as plastic waste, untreated sewage, and chemical contaminants (including fertilisers and pesticides from agriculture, as well as heavy metals and industrial chemicals)—leads to the contamination of rivers, lakes, and oceans. This degrades ecosystems, threatens aquatic life, and reduces the availability

of clean water for human consumption.

Deforestation disrupts the water cycle by diminishing ecosystems' ability to retain and regulate water flow. This can result in soil erosion, reduced groundwater recharge, and altered rainfall patterns. Power plants, particularly those reliant on fossil fuels or nuclear energy, often require vast amounts of water for cooling. While hydroelectric dams provide renewable energy, they can disrupt natural water flows, affecting aquatic habitats and downstream water availability.

The expansion of cities and towns increases water demand, while inadequate wastewater management contributes to the pollution of rivers and lakes. Additionally, urban run-off—carrying pollutants such as oil, chemicals, and debris—further damages water ecosystems.

While the direct impact of socio-cultural centres on these global issues may be relatively small compared to other economic sectors, it is essential to include measures in your environmental action plan to reduce water consumption and minimise both direct and indirect impacts on water quality and aquatic ecosystems. Every contribution matters, and cultural institutions, by their very nature, have the potential to inspire others to take action.

However, before we can effectively raise awareness among others, it is crucial to deepen our own understanding of the issue. Below are some links to relevant information, data, and European policies:

UN-Water coordinates the United Nations work on water:

It annually publishes a development report.

LINK TIP:

UN-Water: Development Report 2024

LINK TIP:

FAO Aquastat

A reliable source for worldwide data on water is the **FAO Aquastat**:

The **European Environmental Agency** has a section of its website dedicated to water with relevant policies, indicators, publications and data, including country-specific fact sheets. See in particular the page about water use and environmental pressures .

LINK TIP:

European Environemental Agency: on Water

LINK TIP:

Water Framework Directive

From a legislation point of view, the reference at European level is the **Water Framework Directive.**

5.1 Water in your SCC

The environmental impact of a socio-cultural centre on water can be categorised into three main groups: direct impacts from freshwater consumption (typically potable water), direct impacts from the discharge of pollutants in wastewater (usually into the sewage system), and indirect impacts arising from the lifecycle of products and services used by the centre.

Water consumption can generally be tracked through water bills and readings from the metres installed by the water supplier. In most cases, this allows for easy monitoring of the building's total water usage, either by manually reading an analogue water me-

tre or by analysing data from a digital smart metre at different time intervals. This, for example, can help detect leaks if the metre records water usage when the centre is closed and no water consumption should be occurring.

Installing sub-metres to monitor the consumption of different areas within a building can be particularly useful in identifying the main sources of water usage.

To assess the impact of direct pollutant emissions in wastewater, it is important to monitor harmful substances, such as the chemical components of cleaning products. Cooking oil and other greasy substances should never be disposed of via the kitchen sink; instead, they should be collected and disposed of separately to prevent contamination.

Indirect impacts arise from the entire lifecycle of the products and services used by the socio-cultural centre. The *Water Footprint* is an indicator that helps make this otherwise invisible but significant water consumption more tangible. While only a few individual products display a water footprint declaration on their label, information on the average water footprint of product categories is available.

For example, studies have shown that throughout the lifecycle of a plastic bottle used to contain one litre of water, approximately seven litres of water are required—from production to disposal.

You can find data on the water footprint of products through several resources, some suggestions:

- **Water Footprint Network**: their Product Gallery provides insights into the water consumption required for various products, based on global averages. It is useful to understand which products are more water-intensive.

- **WaterStat Database**: this dataset offers statistics on blue, green, and grey water footprints based on peer-reviewed research. It is aligned with the Global Water Footprint Assessment standard, making it a reliable source for detailed water footprint data.

- A **Friends of the Earth** commissioned report by Trucost about the ecological and water footprint of seven categories of products.

It is important to become acquainted to terms that identify different types of water:

- Blue water is the freshwater that can be found in bodies of water on the surface or underground, such as rivers, lakes, aquifers.

- Green water is the water available for the plants in the soil.

- Grey water usually refers to water that has been previously used and may contain some impurities, like water from sinks, that usually goes into sewers but may be re-used, after being filtered, for instance for irrigation or for WC's cisterns. In the frame of water footprint terminology, however, grey water is the volume of freshwater that is required to assimilate the load of pollutants emitted during the life cycle of a product or service, in order to dilute pollutants to such an extent that the quality of the water remains above agreed water quality standards.

- Black or brown water is water discharged from toilets and contains high concentration of organic pollutants.

5.2 Key people

As for energy and the other thematic areas, it is important to onboard all members of your organisation as well as your public and

stakeholders, so that the process of developing a water policy and a water action plan involves all relevant actors, applying OD principles.

To tackle water sustainable issues, these are some of the key actors you should try to involve;

- the facility manager or other managerial positions who are responsible for the maintenance of the building;
- staff members responsible for cleaning and for buying cleaning products, or the service provider if the cleaning service is outsourced;
- staff members responsible for food and beverage, or the service provider if the service is outsourced;
- people in charge of community engagement and communication (in order to educate and involve the community, promote water-saving behaviors, and gather feedback)

It is also important to involve your other main stakeholders, taking into account their stance towards water efficiency.

5.3 Plan your strategy and actions

Once you assessed your current direct and indirect impacts, you can start planning your first steps.

A good starting point is to implement actions that involve, inform, and train your team, audience, and stakeholders. These may include training sessions for staff responsible for maintenance, cleaning, and catering; placing stickers, signs, and panels with water-saving instructions near points of direct water consumption; establishing feedback mechanisms for staff and visitors; and organising aware-

ness campaigns to communicate and share your commitment and initiatives.

Behavioural changes can lead to significant water savings at minimal cost.

When addressing direct consumption, priority should be given to preventing waste, starting with the identification and repair of leaks. If the budget allows, investing in water-saving technologies should be considered. These may include WC cisterns with automatic or manually operated flush-stop buttons or a dual-flush system, waterless urinals or those equipped with automatic (time-limited) or manual controls to prevent continuous flushing, low-flow taps, aerated taps that reduce water consumption, and percussion or timed taps.

The adoption of systems for greywater recovery and reuse, particularly for WC flushing and irrigation, is becoming increasingly common.

To minimise the direct release of pollutants, it is essential to establish a system that ensures all harmful and polluting substances are identified and, where possible, avoided. Staff should be trained in their correct use and disposal, with clear and accessible information displayed at strategic locations.
Regarding indirect impacts, the water footprint of products and services should be considered as part of a sustainable procurement strategy (see the section on material flows).

RESOURCES

A valuable online resource for developing your water sustainability action plan is Julie's Bicycle's Water Management Building Guide.

It also provides best practices, benchmarks and an estimation of return of investment for different measures you may adopt. Some content is specific to the UK: could you provide country specific content for your own community?

LINK TIP:

Julie's Bicycle: Water Management Building Guide

"WaterSense at work" is a publication from the US Environment Protection Agency that highlights best practices in water management for different kind of facilities, commercial or institutional. While made for the American system, most of its suggestions and guidelines are also valid for European Socio-Cultural Centres. It is downloadable at this link:

LINK TIP:

"WaterSense at work" publication

The City Water Circles - CWC project is an Interreg project on whose page it is possible to find examples of innovative solutions for rainwater harvesting and greywater reuse:

LINK TIP:

The City Water Circles project

In the FULCRUM self assessment tool you can find examples of measures in the water field of action.

LINK TIP:

The FULCRUM self-assessment tool

6. Mobility

Mobility accounts for a significant share of our environmental impacts.

It contributes around 24% of global CO_2 emissions (a higher proportion in developed economies such as the USA and EU) and releases other greenhouse gases, including nitrous oxide.

However, climate change is not mobility's only impact. Vehicles also emit pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x), particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which pose serious risks to human health—especially in cities, where traffic congestion leads to high concentrations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) attributes around 4.2 million deaths annually to ambient air pollution, with transportation a major contributor.

Transportation also causes numerous other harms to the environment and health, including noise pollution (which stresses humans and wildlife alike); land consumption and habitat loss from infrastructure; resource-intensive vehicle production and operation (e.g. minerals for batteries and fossil fuels); hazardous waste (e.g. tyres and batteries); and water pollution from road, highway and airport runoff carrying oil, heavy metals and other contaminants.

Mobility is essential, and the cultural sector cannot avoid it. That said, given these substantial impacts, careful planning and management are crucial to minimise harm to the environment and human health.

Before exploring approaches to reduce your centre's mobility footprint, we recommend these reliable sources for data on mobility's environmental impacts worldwide and in the EU:

LINK TIP:
International Energy Agency (IEA)

- **International Energy Agency (IEA)**: there you can find on overview of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and energy consumption of transport.

- **World Health Organization (WHO)**: the WHO has conducted many epidemiologic studies regarding health and air pollution, in particular in European big cities, and offers an overview of the health impacts of air pollution caused by vehicles.

LINK TIP:
World Health Organization (WHO)

LINK TIP:
European Environment Agency (EEA)

- **European Environment Agency (EEA)**: on the EEA's website you can deepen your knowledge on the environmental impacts of mobility, including the effects on human health of air pollution and noise.

- This web page of the University of Washington can help you to better understand the impact of Transportation on Water Pollution.

LINK TIP:
University of Washington on water pollution

6.1. Mobility in your CC

As with other fields of action, the first step towards improvements is to map your current situation.

Mobility in a socio-cultural organisation encompasses many aspects, so categorise your needs to address them effectively. Consider these separately:

- Local day-to-day home-to-work trips by staff.
- Regional, national and international travel by staff and members for events, projects and exchanges.
- Mobility needs and choices of artists, performers, speakers and partner organisations for events hosted at your centre.
- How your audience reaches your venue(s).
- Transport of furniture, equipment and materials for activities hosted at your centre or organised off-site.

Differentiate between target groups to identify which you can influence directly or indirectly.

It should be straightforward to collect data on trips your centre directly organises and funds (e.g. travel for guest performers or staff expenses). Use surveys to gather data from staff and audience on self-organised trips.

The detail required depends on your assessment goals and calculation tools. For rough estimates, broad categories suffice (e.g. plane, train, bus, private car, bike) plus distance between origin and destination. For precision, include specifics like car model, fuel type and exact route.

While surveying staff and users' habits, also note available alternatives such as public transport timetables and shared mobility options.

Assess options to reduce mobility demand overall: identify activities driving trips and eliminate unnecessary ones.

Design questionnaires to uncover not just habits but motivations. For example, staff might drive due to school drop-offs or grocery shopping en route—insights like these can inspire solutions such as walk-to-school schemes or sustainable delivery groups for bulk purchases.

6.2 Key People

Start with management: who decides on mobility? Who could introduce a travel policy or approve work trips? If absent, appoint a mobility manager (see below).

Consider individual choices too: how can home-to-work trips become more sustainable? What drives colleagues' habits, and what might encourage greener shifts? Ask the same of your audience.

Externally, engage local policymakers and public transport managers. Improve venue accessibility by public transport and co-design incentives with stakeholders.

6.3 Plan Your Strategy and Actions

With a full picture of your centre's mobility issues, plan actions for sustainable solutions.

This falls under mobility management, led by a Mobility Manager. In Italy, this role—introduced by law in 1998—is mandatory for public bodies with over 300 employees and private firms with over 800. The manager develops a home-to-work travel plan to cut private car use via alternatives like public transport, cycling and carpooling.

Even if not mandatory for your organisation, designate a responsible person with training to drive change.

Sustainable mobility requires buy-in from all key stakeholders. Involve them early when drafting a Sustainable Travel Policy and Mobility Plan to boost success.

The Travel Policy sets general and specific objectives plus core rules. The Mobility Plan details actions aligned with them.

Mobility affects the environment and health in many ways, so prioritise measures tackling multiple impacts. For instance, switching to electric vehicles cuts urban air pollution but not resource use or energy demands (unless powered by renewables); it does little for congestion, accidents or active lifestyles. By contrast, shifting to cycling addresses them all.

The most effective actions reduce mobility needs first:

- promote smart working and virtual meetings to cut work trips;
- address non-work factors driving car use (e.g. school runs or shopping) with alternatives;
- for business travel: develop a travel policy setting rules aimed at prioritising actions, from preventing unnecessary travel trips through video-conferencing, to identifying a hierarchy of means of transport, from the most to the least sustainable options, and setting financial measures to incentivise sustainable choices. Try to cluster meetings in similar locations and combine meetings if

significant travel is required;

- give priority to local artists/speakers; for touring artists, cooperate with the artists and with the other venues in order to optimise travel arrangements;

Next, make sustainable options appealing:

- **For staff**: provide company bikes, repair tools, showers and lockers. Organise "walk to work" or "cycle to work" weeks or competitions awarding sustainable mobility choices. Promote the use of collective public transport (by providing subscriptions at discount rate for employees, by adjusting start and end time of work to public transport schedules. Organise car pooling among employees when using the car is unavoidable.

- **For audience**: offer secure bike parking. Boost public transport: partner for combined fares, provide real-time updates. Inform your audience on how to reach your venue/event sustainably: make sure that information regarding public transport, bike lanes and bike parking are clearly visible on your website and communication material. Offer small incentives, such as discounted tickets or benefits, to visitors that reach your venue sustainably.

- **For artists'/speakers'/guests' travel**: share your sustainable travel policy with the artists/speakers who perform in your events, and book for them sustainable transport whenever possible; book hotel rooms so to minimise distance from the venue and reduce the impact of local transport.

- **For logistics**: choose providers that use sustainable logistic, like cargo bike deliveries or electric vehicles powered by renewable energy sources. If you use courier services choose bike couriers whenever possible. For external events choose locations easily reachable with sustainable means of transport.

Finally, monitor impacts. With distance and transport mode data, calculate emissions using free online CO_2 calculators (specify which one, as models vary). You can also estimate pollutants like NO_x and PM_{10}, from vehicle-specific factors to regional averages.

GOOD PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

For an example of Travel Policy, you can look at FULCRUM travel policy

LINK TIP:

FULCRUM Travel Policy

LINK TIP:

European Mobility Week

The website of the European Mobility Week, has a rich library of Mobility Actions and a section with all the actions awarded in previous years.

Incentives for employees: The Smithsonian Institute has many benefits that help reduce the impact of mobility: the Transit Subsidy Program provides up to the current maximum per month for mass transit costs incurred while commuting to and from an employee's work duty station; the Commuter Bicycle Reimbursement Program provides employees with reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred for the purchase of a bicycle or bicycle maintenance, repair and storage if the bicycle is regularly used for travel between the employee's home and place of employment; Telework: The Smithsonian offers a telework program to eligible employees that allows them to work remotely. Child Care/Day Care: the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Program (SEEC), serves children between the ages of 3 months and 6 years through its child development center, preschool program and kindergarten.

Business travel: check Julie's Bicycle Business Travel Guide, available at this link.

LINK TIP:

Julie's Bicycle: Business Travel Guide

LINK TIP:

"Sur la Route" project

Artists' mobility: Sur la route, (in French) is a project developed by the association Slowfest and Armodo network, supported by the ENCC, the Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine and the European Union through the programme LIVEMX, aiming at mapping and promoting tours based on sustainable mobility.

Emissions calculators: the Shift Culture project has produced a fact sheet that compares carbon calculators.

The FULCRUM self assessment tool has examples of measures to be implemented in order to achieve a 100% score in mobility management, that could be inspirational for your mobility plan.

LINK TIP:

Shift Culture project: Fact sheet

LINK TIP:

FULCRUM self-assessment tool

7. Material Flow

Material flows cover the materials, objects and equipment that organisations purchase, use, consume and dispose of. A well-known indicator of the environmental impact from material production, consumption and use is the Earth Overshoot Day, which marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources exceeds Earth's capacity to regenerate them within that year.

For 2025, this fell on 24 July. Resource consumption now outstrips planetary regeneration, depleting stocks for future generations. We must seek production methods and ideas that use far fewer resources.

Meanwhile, waste generation exceeds the environment's capacity to break it down, leading to pollutant and waste accumulation in ecosystems.

A robust method for assessing a product's full environmental impacts—from raw material extraction to waste disposal, or "cradle to grave"—is the **Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)**, which is also used to calculate footprints, such as the Carbon Footprint and the Water Footprint that we have previously introduced, as well as the Environmental Footprints, which cover a wider array of environmental impacts.

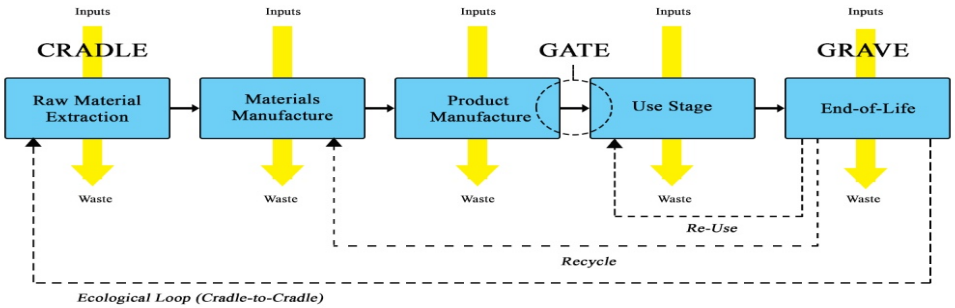


Illustration by MtW17 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=97566700

The "cradle to grave" model reflects the linear economy: resources are extracted, processed into products, used, and then discarded as waste back into the environment.

In order to achieve sustainability, we have to shift to a circular economy via the cradle-to-cradle approach, where waste becomes a resource and materials stay in closed loops.

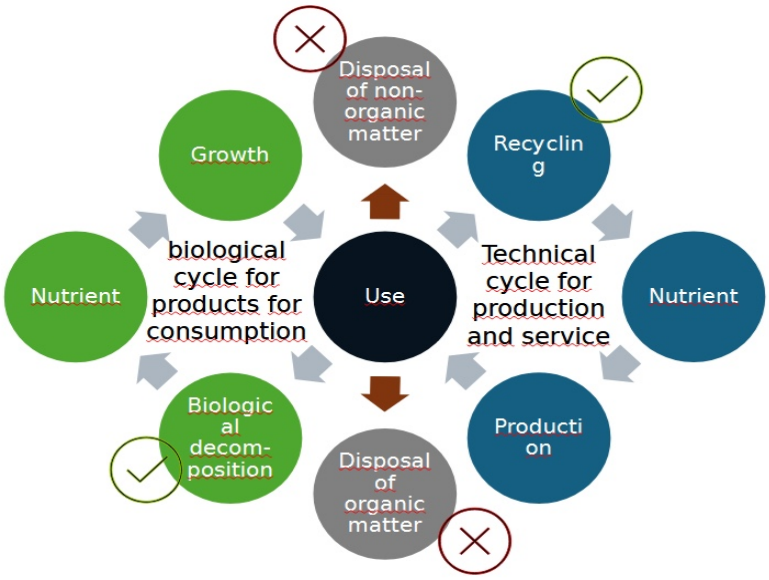


Figure: technological and biological cycles, illustration by Franziska Mohaupt

This figure depicts ideal material cycles: biological (green) and technical (blue). In reality, many products are discarded post-use (grey), breaking the loops. Cradle to cradle insists on closing these flows to enable circular processes.

Preventing waste is key, guided by the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and the five-step waste hierarchy in the EU Waste Framework Directive.

Complementing cradle to cradle are sufficiency (do we really need to procure this?) and efficiency (minimising resource use in devices like computers, dishwashers or light bulbs).

Before exploring ways to reduce your centre's material flow footprint, here are reliable sources for data on production and material use impacts worldwide and in the EU:

- If you want to learn more about circular economy from an international perspective, the UNDP-Website may be interesting: https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-is-circular-economy-and-how-it-helps-fight-climate-change

- The cradle to cradle approach is explained here: https://c2c.ngo/en/cradle-to-cradle/

- For an introduction to Life Cycle Assessment: https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/lifecycleassessment.html

- And how LCA is applied to Environmental Footprints: https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/green-business/environmental-footprint-methods/life-cycle-assessment-ef-methods_en

- European Environment Agency (EEA): on the EEA's website you can deepen your knowledge on the environmental impacts of our use of resources. https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/at-a-glance/economy-and-resources

- On the EU waste policy: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/waste-and-recycling_en

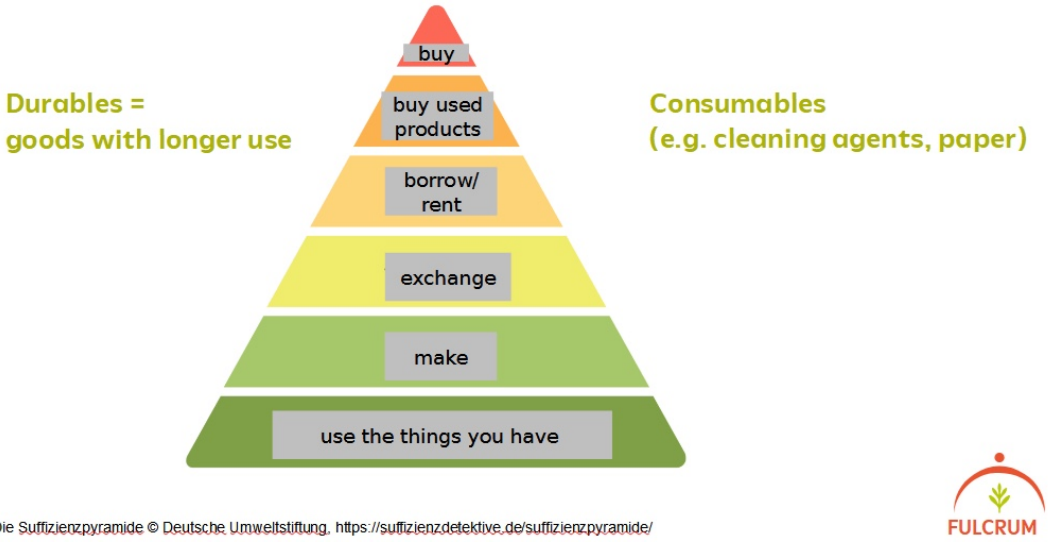
- About the Earth overshoot day: https://overshoot.footprintnetwork.org/about-earth-overshoot-day/

7.1. Material Flows in Your Centre

As with other fields of action, the first step towards improvements is to map your current situation.

Material flows in a socio-cultural organisation encompass many aspects, so categorise your needs for clarity. Key principles for managing them include:

Reduce, reuse, recycle—incorporating sufficiency (using only what's necessary) and distinguishing between durables (e.g. equipment) and consumables (e.g. supplies).



- Green procurement: also known as sustainable procurement, is the process of purchasing goods, services, works, and utilities in a way that achieves value for money over the product's life cycle while minimising negative impacts on the environment and promoting positive outcomes for society and the economy. A good green procurement:

  › Considers environmental impact alongside price and quality when making purchasing decisions.

  › Includes criteria such as reduced resource use, lower emissions, longer lifespans, modular designs, recyclability, and minimal toxicity.

- › May involve choosing suppliers with strong environmental credentials or requiring certain environmental standards or labels in contracts.

- › Often requires a review of current purchasing practices and integration of environmental criteria into procurement policies.

- › Can include both simple actions (e.g., buying recycled paper) and more complex strategies (e.g., setting supply chain sustainability standards)choose devices with longer lifespans, efficiency, and modular designs.

- Waste management: separate collection of materials, including organics.

- Act as a role model.

View your organisation as a "black box": materials enter, get used, repaired, consumed or altered, then exit. Classify them roughly as consumables (e.g. cleaning agents, paper, ink, craft materials, food—prioritise eco-labels and reduction) or durables (e.g. printers, computers, theatre equipment, furniture—focus on reparability, recyclability and durability).

Most items are procured with invoices, so start with a simple overview: who buys what, and when?

7.2. Key People

Use these questions to identify key actors:

Who handles procurement? Is it one person, a team, or decentralised? Are there rules or oversight? Clarify responsibilities at minimum.

Who decides what to procure and its quality? Use eco-labels for quick assessment. Define the process in a procurement team code of conduct.

Who uses or consumes resources? Engage all staff on economical use, recycling and proper waste separation.

Who manages disposal? Develop a waste management concept: gather sustainable options, train staff via short sessions, and share info organisation-wide.

7.3. Plan your strategy and actions

Follow the sustainable management cycle from Chapter 3.1.

Step 1: Secure management board support.

Step 2: Appoint a person or team to lead procurement and waste management planning and implementation.

Step 3: Assess procurement paths.

- Ask: Who procures what? Consult teams on needs definition, buying timing and materials.

- Analyse flows: What's essential? Can you plan ahead, bundle orders or group product categories?

- Review: Where are orders placed? Which eco-labels suit products? Which suppliers are sustainable?

Step 4: Evaluate waste management.

Do you separate paper, glass, plastics and organics? How do you engage the team?

Step 5: Draft a guideline for procurement and disposal processes.

Centralise where possible, e.g.:

- Office supplies.

- Food and beverages.

- Workshop materials (craft supplies, textiles, paints).

- Technical equipment (IT, building tech, lighting, sound).

Step 6: Plan measures based on these principles:

- Efficiency: Minimise consumable use.

- Sufficiency: Question needs (e.g. IT device numbers, screen sizes, menu variety; prefer used over new).

- Sustainable cleaning: List approved products, identify suppliers, adjust future orders and inform staff.

- Durables criteria: Prioritise longevity labels, repairability, modularity and guarantees; Source vetted retailers.

- Waste workshop: Define categories, organise collection, assign communication and ensure adoption.

- Reduce food waste:

  - Offer few dishes with minimal ingredients.

  - Provide varied portion sizes.

  - Encourage guests to take leftovers in their own containers.

  - Serve tap water in carafes.

  - Eliminate straws, disposable tableware and excess packaging

- Source food and beverages from organic farming, locally, seasonally, and with vegetarian/vegan options.

- Prefer suppliers who use recycled, reused, or reclaimed materials.

- Choose products and services with environmental certifications and **ecolabels**.

- Develop guidelines or plans to foster **green procurement** for events, exhibitions, and operations.

Step 7: Finalise plans with start/end dates, responsible persons, budget and management mandate.

Step 8: Monitor material flows.

- Agree on indicators tied to long-term goals, tracked regularly:

- Procurement: Use invoices/orders (easy for consumables via quantities over time).
- Durables: Maintain an inventory.
- Waste: Track bin volumes, emptying frequency and separation quality.
- Publish annual waste figures alongside implemented measures.

GOOD PRACTICES AND RESOURCES

Examples of labels that can help you identify sustainable products and services you may want to include in your Green Procurement:

- **EU Ecolabel**: Certifies products and services with reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle. Awarded by the European Union and based on strict criteria (ISO Type I). A detailed catalogue browsable by product category and country is available here
- **EU Energy label**: By law, the European Community Energy Label must be displayed on all new household products displayed for sale, hire or hire-purchase, and also for some commercial/professional products. The database of labelled products is available here
- **Blue Angel (Blauer Engel)**: Germany's official ecolabel for environmentally friendly products and services
- **Nordic Swan**: The official ecolabel for Nordic countries, covering a wide range of products and services
- **ENERGY STAR**: Indicates high energy efficiency for appliances, electronics, and buildings, backed by the USA government
- **EPEAT** is a global rating system for greener electronics, in 43 countries
- **EU Organic Logo**: Certifies organic food produced according to EU regulations
- **Fairtrade**: Ensures ethical and sustainable production and fair wages for producers
- **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)**: Certifies wood, paper, and forest products from responsibly managed forests
- **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)**: Blue label for sustainably sourced seafood

LINK TIP:

For a comprehensive list of ecological labels you can search here

You can find inspiration for your Green Procurement from these projects and organisations:

- The **Green Europe Experience** project (Creative Europe European Cooperation project), which aimed to develop a network of sustainable music festivals, led one partner to elaborate a map of local and bio suppliers, farmers, etc., fostering 100% traceability, local and organic food and providing 50% vegetarian options.

- **GreenFest/LIFE GreenFEST** (Italy) is a Life project which developed and implemented green public procurement criteria for cultural events, such as music festivals and exhibitions, with EU-wide applicability.

- **The ROCK project** (Regeneration and Optimisation of Cultural Heritage in Creative and Knowledge Cities, funded by Horizon 2020) developed, among other tools, a guide for cities to address the environmental impact of cultural events, including tips on how to foster green procurement, e.g. by setting minimum sourcing standards (whether products are organic, how they have been harvested or manufactured), giving preference to hired, reused, reclaimed and recycled materials and products, etc.

- **HOME Manchester** has been working with the Business Growth Hub advisory to establish Sustainable Procurement Surveys. HOME have committed to eliminate single-use plastic by 2020 and have a Zero-Waste-to-Landfill policy. Current initiatives include: fully recyclable takeaway food packaging, having all in-house catering waste composted, recycled or converted into waste-to-energy biofuel, and a commitment to reusing and redistributing 100% of exhibition materials and building elements. You can see their Environmental Action Plan here

LINK TIP:

FULCRUM self-assessment tool

- FULCRUM self assessment tool contains suggestions of criteria for your Green Procurement

LINK TIP:

Quality Assessment of Green Aspects in Creative Europe

› Have a look at the **Quality Assessment of Green Aspects in Creative Europe Projects (Culture Strand).** It describes how environmental aspects are evaluated in Creative Europe projects and has a section on green procurements (and also addresses other relevant fields as energy, mobility, waste, awareness

raising...).

Finally, here is a list of Socio-Cultural Centres that apply principles of Circular Economy:

- **La Recyclerie (Paris, France)**
  - Former railway station converted into an eco-cultural hub
  - Repair workshop
  - Urban garden
  - Plastic-free café

LINK TIP:
La Recyclerie (Paris)

- **Officine Creative @ Cecchi Point (Turin, Italy)**
  - DIY workshops inside a socio-cultural centre
  - Bicycle repair and promotion of sustainable mobility
  - Wood carpentry
  - Tool library
  - "Precious Plastic": plastic recycling equipment and workshops

LINK TIP:
Officine Creative @ Cecchi Point (Turin, Italy)

- **Kampnagel (Hamburg, Germany)**
  - Theatre using modular and recycled set designs
  - Collaboration with local artisans
  - Waste reduction and extended lifespan of installations

LINK TIP:
Kapmnagel (Hamburg, Germany)

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