



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE

# Estonian National Guide for Organizing Environmentally Friendly Events



# Table of contents

Introduction	3
General Principles	4
1. Materials and Procurement	7
2. Transport and Logistics	12
3. Energy Use	18
4. Catering and Water Use	22
5. Waste Management	29
6. Local Environment and Community	33
7. Accessibility	37
8. Communication	41
9. Requirements and Recommendations for Caterers	46

The preparation of the guide and information materials have been co-financed by the European Union Cohesion Fund for the 2021–2027 period under the SFOS project no. 2021-2027.2.04.24-0025 “Implementation of awareness-raising and training activities and the application of solutions related to circular economy.” The project was carried out by the Circular Economy Department of the Ministry of Climate. The guide and supporting materials were developed as part of the communication plan activity “Guidelines for Reuse Solutions.”

To promote circular economy, the Ministry of Climate has developed support measures in cooperation with the Environmental Investment Centre. Read more: <https://kik.ee/et/toetatavad-tegevused>.



Kaasrahastanud  
Euroopa Liit



Eesti  
tuleviku heaks



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE

Authors of the guide and information materials

Kadri Kalle

Marleen Viidul

Raimo Matvere

Kristiina Kerge

Acento OÜ

**acento**

Design: Kaili Kalle

Special thanks to: Ligipääsuke.ee (feedback on the guide to ensure accessibility for visually impaired people), the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People (support in ensuring accessibility of the guide), Vaimupuu MTÜ (compiling the text in plain language and testing it with the target group), event organizers (input and feedback on the guide).

# Introduction

This guide is for all event organizers in Estonia to support them in creating more environmentally friendly events. Each chapter of the guide addresses a specific area, outlines general principles to focus on and offers recommendations for decisions and actions to take before, during, and after the event. The guide is complemented by adaptable checklists for different types of events (available [here](#)) that help translate these principles into practical steps.

Each chapter includes a link to a thematic instructional video on YouTube, commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in 2023. These videos are in Estonian and do not include subtitles or sign language interpretation (except for the accessibility video, which was created by the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People). However, YouTube's autogenerated subtitles can be used.

All hyperlinks referred to throughout the guide lead to further materials in Estonian.

**To support the accessibility of this guide for people with intellectual disabilities, each chapter begins with a summary in plain language.**

Everyone can help protect nature.

Even big events can be planned in a way that is good for nature.

This guide is for everyone who wants to organize events and protect nature.

It is written here what to think about:

- + before the event,
- + during the event,
- + and after the event.

Each chapter starts with a plain language summary.

# General Principles

## Why Protecting Nature Matters?

Talk with your team about how you can protect nature at your event and how much these actions might cost.

- + Where will the event happen?
- + Are there trash bins?
- + Are there toilets?
- + Is there a place to park bicycles?
- + Can people get there by bus or train?
- + Can you use wind or solar energy?
- + Who will collect the trash?

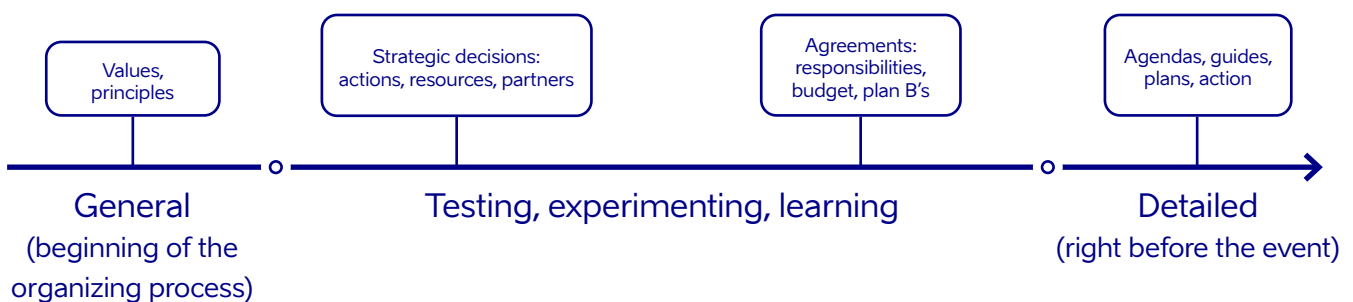
Write down your answers and talk about them with your team.

## Why focus on environmentally friendly events?

It's easy to think that there are more important sectors than events where to work on environmental issues, or that someone else should do more. But real change happens when each of us strives for sustainability in our own field. Events are good places for this — they are like small-scale models of society, where people gather for a short time, making it easier to influence their behavior. Events are also great places to test different approaches and set new trends.

To integrate environmental principles into an event, treat them **as an essential part of the event planning process**: they should be incorporated into the action plan, budget, communication strategy, etc.

**If you're applying environmental principles for the first time**, take more time than you think you'll need, and begin at the very start of the event planning process. Start with the general things by defining your team's shared values and principles, and then work toward the specifics.



General process for planning environmentally friendly activities

The environmental friendly event organization is covered in this guide in the following areas:



Most activities in all of these areas should be addressed prior to the event. For example, the choice of venue significantly affects energy usage, transport options, and the potential impact on the surrounding community.

Organizers usually have more flexibility in areas like catering, material use, reduction and separate collection of waste, event's accessibility for different target groups.

Environmental communication should follow the same principles as general communication: starting with internal team communication, extending to partners during the planning process, and having clear and simple messages to visitors during the event.

### General management recommendations

- + If possible, assign a dedicated environmental or sustainability coordinator in your team.
- + At the same time, it is important that the whole team understands and integrates environmental activities into their own fields of responsibility (e.g. production and communication teams know what they should do regarding environmental actions).
- + Map the current situation (what exists, what's missing, what are the priority action areas).
- + Involve and train your team early in the process - set environmental goals and actions together so that everyone feels a sense of ownership.
- + Create an action plan and timeline; assign responsibilities.
- + Identify suitable partners early – the earlier, the better.
- + Plan communication (before, during, and after the event).
- + Involve volunteers in implementing environmental actions – find guidance [here](#).
- + Trust but verify – monitor your team, partners, and visitors before, during, and after the event.
- + Document what works and what doesn't (photos, notes).
- + Collect data – feedback from visitors and partners, information on waste volumes, energy use, etc.
- + Analyze results and draw conclusions.
- + Communicate and share information with other organizers – how they have solved problems, share your own experiences!
- + Aim to do even better next time!

Events vary greatly, so this guide cannot cover all specific cases. Regularly organised events may benefit from their own personalized guide tailored to their unique features, as long as it aligns with this national guide.

**Good example:** [Estonian Fashion Festival](#)

A sustainability and/or accessibility action plan can also be designed for a longer period, and improvements implemented gradually.



---

More information on general sustainable event planning can be found in this [instructional video](#) (16 min).

The full video playlist for all environmental areas for events is available [here](#).

---



# 1. Materials and Procurement

## Materials and Buying Things

Don't buy things you don't really need.

Don't buy single-use items.

*(For example: plastic plates, balloons, printed paper ads)*

Choose things made from natural materials, like:

- + wood
- + fabric
- + glass

Use items more than once —

save them for next year's event.

*(For example: posters, name tags, lanyards)*

Choose things that can be recycled later.

This helps make less trash and protect nature.

## General principles

Every product has an environmental impact. To reduce this impact, there are few simple rules.

- 1) Think through what your event really needs and what it doesn't.
- 2) Choose durable items and use them as long as possible.
- 3) Avoid all kinds of disposable, single-use products as much as possible.
- 4) Prefer natural materials and/or those that are easily recyclable.

The smarter you are about planning your purchases and materials, the less waste your event will generate!

## What materials and products are environmentally friendly?

Prefer **minimally processed, durable, and natural materials** (e.g. wood, reed). Choose materials with minimal use of inks, adhesives, labels, etc.

Avoid plastic products when possible. Although some plastics (PET, PP, LDPE, HDPE) can be recycled, it's better to avoid them — especially PVC, which is commonly used in banners. If plastics must be used, prefer monomaterials (items made from a single type of plastic) and uncolored options, as these are more recyclable. In general, monomaterial products, i.e. products made of one type of material, should be preferred.

Prefer materials and products with verified environmental or ecolabels. Common labels include:



More info about ecolabels [here](#).

**NB! Biodegradable does not automatically mean environmentally friendly.** Items like biodegradable balloons or coffee cups are still single-use. Always prioritize reusable solutions. Read more about biodegradable plastics on the Estonian Ministry of Climate's website [here](#).

## Common items at events and their environmentally friendly alternatives

### Name tags, lanyards, wristbands

- + Prefer lanyards without printed year number, so that they can be reused.
- + Reuse sponsor/partner lanyards or ask attendees to bring theirs from past events.
- + Use reusable badge holders or erasable name tags.
- + Print name tags on non-laminated paper for easier recycling.
- + If lanyards are not reused, prefer paper over fabric.
- + **Collect all name tags, badges, and lanyards after the event** for reuse or recycling.

**Good example:** Clearly visible badge collection at Latitude59 conference 2024.

### Signage, posters, banners

- + Assess what needs to be printed vs. what can be digital (e.g. invitations, certificates).
- + Laminate only materials meant for reuse.
- + **Avoid dates and year numbers** on signage to allow reuse.
- + Design materials so that time-sensitive information can be easily updated (e.g. covered, repainted).

Some examples of designed signage available [here](#).

**Good example:** I Land Sound festival uses plywood for signs and directional boards, which are reused annually and can be repainted if needed.



## Decorations and design

- + **Avoid single-use decor** — balloons, confetti, single-use carpets, etc.
- + Rent or make reusable decorations yourself (which you can rent out yourself).
- + When making decorations yourself, use second-hand materials as much as possible (e.g. leftover paint and other rejects from hardware stores).
- + Use potted or local seasonal plants (in a manner that the collection does not harm nature or this species!) instead of cut flowers, consider plant rental — the environmental impact of cut flowers is rather big!



**Good example:** Startup Wise Guys expo area at Startup Day 2023 used second-hand carpets (single-use carpets were banned by the event). →

## Gifts and merch

- + First ask: **are gifts even necessary?**
- + **Allow speakers to choose** whether they want a gift or not.
- + Gifts should be practical! Most people already have tote bags and reusable water bottles. Consider local (organic) foods or experiences (e.g. a free ticket to your next event).
- + Merch for sale should also be practical and made from natural, eco-certified materials.
- + Also do not give store-bought cut flowers as gifts.

**Good example:** Võnge Festival sewed its logo onto second-hand clothes to create unique [merch](#).

### Merch

Koostöös **UUSKASUTUSKESKUSEGA** oleme loonud festivali merchi, mis on täiesti kordumatu ja enneolematult keskkonnasõbralik. Valisime nende kauplustest välja mõned riideesemed ja **ECODISAIN** õmbles külge Vönke logoga embleemid. Samuti on rõivaste seas osad, mis möödunud või varasemal aastal festivalile unustatud, kuid pole hiljem huvi tuntud. Igatahes - mitte ükski särk, dressikas, tagi, müts või muu hilp ei kordu.

Piletid / Event / Võngerjad



## Before the event

- + **Assign a team member** for materials and inventory, who is responsible for the following steps.
- + **Map out what and why is needed** at your event: decorations, name tags, gifts etc.
- + Identify **which items are single-use** and can be replaced by reusable alternatives. Decide what you can rent and what you need to buy.
- + If **external parties** (e.g. expo booths) are involved in the event, provide them with guidelines about approved and banned materials — include these conditions to their contracts/ agreements.
- + Organize **pre-event briefings** with traders, exhibitors, etc., to ensure everyone understands the requirements.

**Good example:** material requirements and recommendations from the sustainability guide of Startup Day 2025 (screenshot from the guide).

The image is a screenshot of a sustainability guide for Startup Day 2025. It features a black background with yellow text and arrows. On the left, the text reads "NO DISPOSABLE GIFTS". Two yellow arrows curve from this text towards the right. The top arrow points to a list of items: "No overproduced things - everyone already has plenty of these at home" and "tote bags, mugs, memory sticks, power banks". The bottom arrow points to a list: "Gifts need to be practical, useful, reusable several times and original" and "no branded printouts and flyers". In the center, a yellow oval contains the text: "Let's be original and share unique experiences instead of things!". To the right of the black area, on a white background, are two paragraphs of text: "Each partner is allowed to bring along 1 type of gifts. Think about what merchandise, book, stickers or other items visitors might find the most use of." and "Don't hand out more than one copy per visitor. Don't leave the materials to public areas outside your area/stand."

## During the event

- + **Assign a team member** to supervise and guide traders and partners, ensuring compliance.
- + Set up a **clearly marked area** where reusable items and materials can be returned at the end of the event (e.g. a box for name tags at the event exit with a visible sign).

## After the event

- + Ensure that rented items **are returned**.
- + **Document** (count) the state of your materials, so that it's easier to get started with your next event – what items you have, what's broken, what's missing etc.
- + Store reusable items in a clean, dry, safe **storage space**. Organize and label the items in a way that they can be easily found and used the next time.



---

More information about the environmental friendly use of materials in this [instructional video](#) (20 min).

---





## 2. Transport and Logistics

### Transport

Moving people and things costs money and harms nature.

So it's important to think ahead and try to reduce transport.

Choose a location that:

- + is near a bus stop or train station,
- + is easy to reach by walking or bike,
- + has bike parking and car parking.

Choose a time for your event when:

- + people can arrive using public transport,
- + people can also get home afterward by bus or train.

Write clear directions from the stop or station to your event.

*(For example:  
"From the stop, walk 300 meters along the path, turn left, and you're there.")*

Walk the journey yourself: this way you are sure that the directions are correct.

Share directions and travel times on your event website and social media.

Talk with your team: should you order a bus that brings people to the event and takes them back home.

Prefer a gas or electric bus.

When you rent things, *(for example: a stage, a sound system, tents, or signs)* try to get them from a place that's close by: from the same city or the next village.

## General principles

Transport is an area where the event organizers may have quite limited opportunities to influence participant choices. This is especially true for international events where participants come from abroad, which usually means a flight (or several).

However, as an organizer, you can still influence how inventory, goods, the organizing team, and participants move locally or nationally.

- + **Make it easier and more attractive to arrive via public transport, bike, or on foot than by car** (e.g. through ticket pricing, offering parking for bikes). Point it out in your communications regularly.
- + When possible, **actively guide participants' travel options** (e.g. shuttles, partnerships with transit providers).
- + Always keep in mind **the safety and comfort of visitors** when promoting green travel options (e.g. secure bike parking, well-lit walkways).

## Communicating about transport

- + **Notify** the team, volunteers, partners, vendors, and production crews early **about travel and parking options** and your sustainability expectations — emphasizing preference for public and non-motorized transport modes.
- + In all promotional materials, always recommend arriving via public transport, bike, or on foot.
- + Mention public transport and bike options first, and car parking last — or not at all.
- + Be specific in your transport info: add the name of the bus stop, line numbers, etc.
- + Walk or ride the routes from main transport stops to the venue yourself to verify the directions

## Compensating the climate impact of transport

Transport can make up a large portion of an event's environmental footprint, so the question arises whether and what can be done to reduce it. Some suggest compensating this by purchasing carbon credits (also known as CO<sub>2</sub> offsets, carbon neutralization etc).

However, using offsets or credits to reduce transport emissions is **not recommended**. The methods behind them are often hard to verify, and transparency is lacking. Often, the promised climate impact is not fully realized. Compensation can create a false sense of having "neutralized" one's impact. For example, when communicating the climate impact of products and services, the European Union is moving in the direction that offsetting and compensation solutions are no longer considered acceptable ways to reduce one's environmental impact.

Of course, organizers or attendees may choose to support local environmental or conservation projects, if their actions are in line with the recommendations of ecologists — but this should be communicated as supporting nature conservation, not as offsetting one's emissions.

## Before the event

- + Whenever possible, choose an event **location that is easily accessible** by public and non-motorized transport, and on foot.
- + If possible, **align the event schedule with public transport timetables** to encourage visitors from further away to travel by bus, train, or ferry. This is especially important when planning the end time of evening events so that visitors can get home afterwards.
- + For large events, inquire with transport providers about adding special buses/trains or additional departures to reduce car traffic in the area (e.g. late-night trains from events in other cities to Tallinn). Consider involving transport companies as event partners or sponsors.
- + If possible, prioritize low-emission vehicles (e.g. gas-powered buses or those meeting EURO6 emissions standards).
- + In locations that are **hard to access** or environmentally sensitive, arrange **dedicated transport** if possible.
- + If attendees can come by bicycle, plan for bike parking location and size, and arrange for necessary infrastructure (locks, signage, etc.).
- + Consider whether it makes sense to sell car-based tickets — a single ticket per vehicle, regardless of how many passengers it carries.
- + **Order** as much equipment, materials, services, etc. as possible from providers located **near the venue** (e.g. using the local cultural center's sound equipment instead of renting from Tallinn).
- + **Optimize the logistics of materials and inventory** by planning efficient transport routes and ordering vehicles appropriate for the amount of transported equipment and goods. Try to consolidate deliveries and reduce the number of separate trips by different suppliers or service providers. Combine goods from multiple partners into a single vehicle where possible.
- + **Enable ride-sharing** by offering platforms for exchanging contact information or reserving seats (e.g. a Facebook or WhatsApp group, a shared online spreadsheet).

**Good example:** [Opinion Festival](#) website lists transport options clearly and in detail (bicycle, train, bus), putting car use last.

**Jalgrattaga**  
Liitu Facebooki grupis Arvamusfestivali rattaretkega. Arvamusfestivali alal on mitu jalgrattaparklat, jälgi kaarti.  
FACEBOOK EVENT ARVAMUSFESTIVALI KAART

**Rongiga**  
Türi raudteejaama saab Tallinn-Türi või Tallinn-Viljandi rongiga. Türitl Paidesse saab mugavalt Liin-A-ga.  
LIIN-A INFO LIIN-A PILETID RONGI SÕIDUPLAAN

**Bussiga**  
Tule bussiga Mäosse või Mäekülla. Liin-A toob su sealt Paidesse ja viib tagasi. Muidugi võid tulla liinibussiga otse Paidesse.  
LIIN-A INFO LIIN-A PILETID BUSSIPILETID

**Autoga**  
Üksi võid samuti tulla, aga võta keegi peale ka! Sõidujagamise infot saad pakkuda ja küsida Arvamusfestivali facebooki lehel festivali lähenedes. Parkla on Tallinna tänaval, jälgi viitasid ja ära valesti pargi!  
FESTIVALI AMETLIK PARKLA SÕIDUJAGAMINE

- + Plan how to restrict visitor access and parking in sensitive areas (e.g. green spaces). Order necessary traffic control equipment and hire professional traffic management staff. Inform both the local community and attendees of traffic restrictions well in advance.
- + If you arrange transportation or encourage attendees to use public transport, coordinate with your transport partners on how to collect data about usage.

### During the event

- + **Remind** visitors about **green travel options** right before and during the event.
- + **Encourage your team and volunteers to use green travel** at the venue (e.g. bikes, electric cargo bikes) to set a good example for visitors.
- + If parking is offered, use professional traffic controllers to prevent environmental damage of green areas.

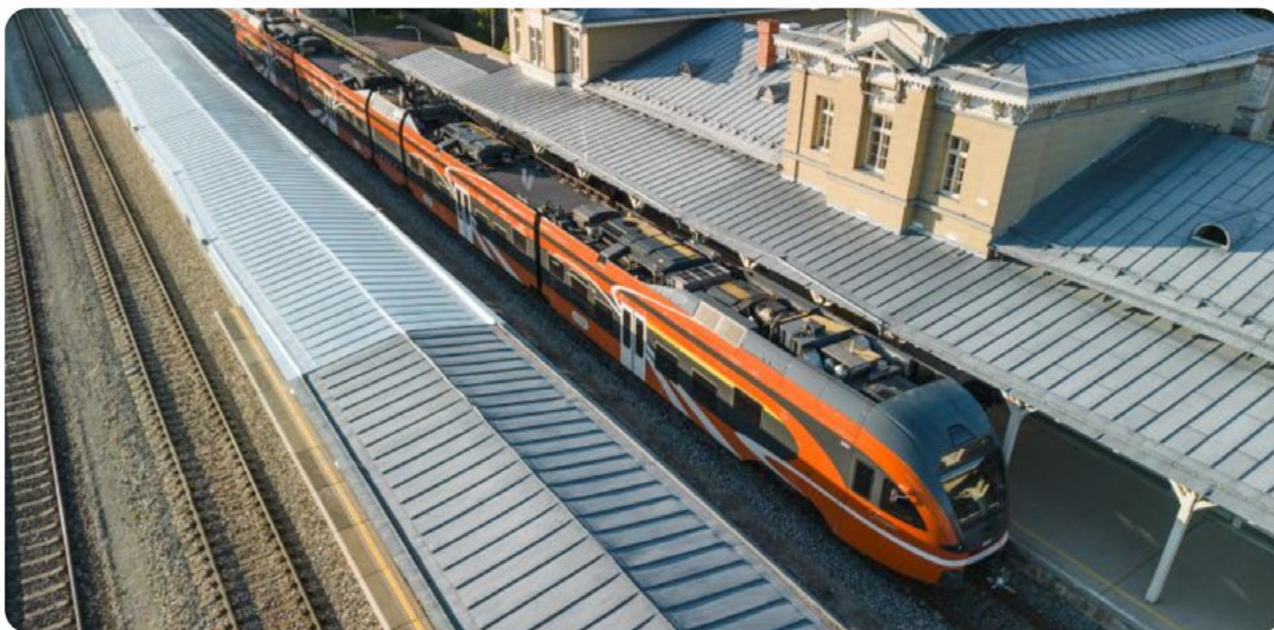
### After the event

- + **Make sure that the natural environment in surrounding areas were not damaged** by vehicle movement or parking during the event. If any landscape damage has occurred, take steps to restore the area to its pre-event condition (e.g. leveling tire tracks on green spaces and reseeding grass).
- + If you collected data about how people traveled to the event, analyze it: which modes of transport were used most, and why? How can you encourage greater use of public and non-motorized transport options in the future?

**Good example:** In 2024, as part of Tartu 2024, the art project "[Maailma Maaliin](#)" turned a shared bus ride into a cultural experience, and the options for reaching the venue by public transport were communicated very well.

The screenshot shows a website page with a dark header containing navigation links: 'Avalaht', 'Avastusretk', 'Praktilist', and 'Meist'. A green circular logo on the left reads 'Tartu 2024 Maailma maaliin'. The main heading is '1 Kuidas tulla?' (How to get to?). Below it, text states: 'Kunstiretked toimuvad nädala- lõppude, algusega Valgast. Valka saab mugavalt tulla ühis-transportiga.' (Art installations take place on weekends, starting from Valga. Valka can be reached conveniently by public transport.) A green button says 'Ühistranspordiga Valka' (By public transport to Valka). On the right, a section titled 'Kuidas tulla Valka?' (How to get to Valka?) explains that art installations are on weekends and provides a schedule: 'Reede: 19:00 – 22:30', 'Laupäev: 12:00 – 15:30 või 17:00 – 20:30', 'Pühapäev: 12:00 – 15:30 või 17:00 – 20:30'. It also lists 'Rongiga' (By train) and 'Bussiga' (By bus) options with specific departure times and a note to check the website for more details.

**Good example:** Sting concert 2024 partnered with Estonian train company Elron to run extra trains from Tartu to Tallinn after the show.



03.06.2024 14:17

## Stingi kontserdi järel liigub Tallinnasse öörong

Elron paneb 10. juuni hilisõhtul pärast Tartu lauluväljakul toimuva legendaarse laulja Stingi kontserdi lõppu käiku Tartu – Tallinna öörongi. Rong peatub Jõgeval, Tamsalus, Tapal, Ülemistel, Kitsekülas ja Balti jaamas.

„Tartu lauluväljakul esinev Sting on kindlasti selle suve üks suurimaid kontserte, mis toob kokku hulga muusikahuvilisi,“ ütles Elroni kommunikatsioonijuht **Kristo Mäe**. „Et muusikahuviliste kodutee oleks kiire ja turvaline, lisame kontserdi järel liinile öise Tartu – Tallinna rongi.“

Erirong väljub Tartu raudteejaamast kell 23:55 ja peatub Jõgeval (kell 00:34), Tamsalus (kell 01:09), Tapal (kell 01:26), Ülemistel (kell 02:09), Kitsekülas (02:13) ja Tallinna Balti jaamas (kell 02:18).

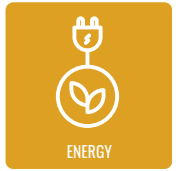
Rongipiletid soovitame osta ette veebilehelt [www.elron.ee](http://www.elron.ee).

Legendaarne helilooja ja laulja Sting on oma maailmaturnee „My Songs“ raames juba astunud publiku ette Ameerikas, Euroopas, Aasias ja Austraalias. Eesti kontsert on osa Euroopa kultuuripealinn Tartu 2024 põhiprogrammist.

*Elron (AS Eesti Liinirongid) on riigile kuuluv operaatorfirma, mis korraldab Eesti Raudtee AS ja Edelaraudtee AS-le kuuluval raudteel reisirongiliiklust. 2023. aastal tehti Elroni rongidega 7,83 miljonit reisi.*



More information about planning environmentally friendly transport in this [instructional video](#) (12 min).



# 3. Energy Use

## Energy

Almost everything at an event needs energy:

- + lights,
- + heating,
- + sound,
- + video.

Making things also uses energy.  
So it's best to use fewer things.

Don't buy things  
you only use once.

Choose a place for your event that:

- + uses solar or wind energy,
- + is built to save energy,
- + uses equipment that saves energy,
- + has clean tap water.

Try not to use generators, if possible.

Computers also use energy —  
delete old photos and files  
that you don't need.

This is called a digital cleanup.

## General principles

Energy use is linked to virtually everything we do. In addition to electricity and heat, energy is also needed to produce all the resources we use.

- + If possible, choose a venue that uses renewable energy and is energy-efficient (the building and equipment).
- + Use electricity from the grid rather than generators whenever possible.
- + Use all resources and materials mindfully — avoiding single-use items also saves energy.
- + Keep digital materials online for a limited time and practice regular digital cleanup.

## Choosing a venue

Venue selection is the most important factor in determining how efficient and sustainable the energy use will be at your event.

- + For indoor events, check if the venue has a **Green Key label, ecolabel, or an environmental management system** — these usually indicate greater attention to energy/resource savings. More info on ecolabels from the Estonian Ministry of Climate website [here](#).
- + Ask what kind of electricity and heating the venue uses — does it include **renewable energy**?
- + If the event is taking place indoors, ask the venue manager what its energy **efficiency class** is.
- + Choose spaces with **good natural light** to reduce artificial lighting needs.
- + In winter, prefer **well-insulated buildings** that don't need to be heated just for your event.
- + Prefer venues with access to the **grid connection** — generator use has a much higher environmental impact.



## Overall reduction in resource use

Energy saving starts with resource saving — **when we use fewer materials and use them for longer**, we also conserve the energy that went into producing them. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on Materials and Procurement.

- + Make sure the event does not generate unnecessary energy or resource use — ensure that taps are not leaking and that lighting and music are turned off in areas that are not in use.

## Is a screen always necessary?

Although we may be used to thinking that digital solutions are more environmentally friendly than printed materials, in some cases the environmental impact of using screens may actually be greater than that of simple paper-based solutions. **The production of electronic devices requires a variety of materials** whose extraction demands significant resources. These devices are often difficult to repair and require regular charging, which also consumes electricity.

Always consider where the use of screens genuinely helps reduce paper use, and where a simple paper sign, chalkboard, or poster might actually be a more resource-efficient option.

Printed information that is reusable and recyclable may have a smaller environmental footprint than a screen that requires constant electricity.

## Digital materials

One often overlooked source of energy use is all the digital content stored online, which also consumes energy through servers.

- + First, consider which materials truly need to be stored online. Photos and videos, for example, can often be provided in smaller file sizes and in more limited selections.
- + **Set a clear deadline** for how long digital materials will remain online, and when they will be deleted.
- + For design, audio, video, and photo files, keep only the final versions and delete all draft or intermediary versions created during the editing process.

More tips for reducing digital waste can be found [here](#).

## Before the event

- + If possible, choose a venue that contributes to sustainable energy use.
- + If possible, involve **someone on your team who can prepare a timeline for the event's energy consumption**, help plan the optimal use of energy and monitor it at the event.
- + Review your devices' **energy ratings** — can any be replaced with more efficient versions? Request energy-efficient lighting (e.g. LEDs) and equipment from rental partners.
- + If you must use **generators, minimize use**: use fewer generators during low-demand times, cover some needs with the grid connection.
- + Consider whether **renewable energy solutions** can be used partially: solar-powered phone chargers, coffee machines, etc. Invite sponsors to support and showcase such solutions, which can also give some visibility to them.

## During the event

- + **Assign a team member** who checks that there are no leaking taps, and that unnecessary lighting, music, screens, etc. are turned off during non-operational hours so that energy is not wasted needlessly.
- + If generators are used at the event, monitor when peak energy consumption occurs and **when the power load can be reduced** (e.g. keeping only essential heating/cooling equipment running). Reconnect equipment so that during non-operational hours, essential equipment is powered from the grid connection, allowing generators to be switched off whenever possible.
- + **Monitor and document** energy use during the event (e.g. take notes) to identify areas for improvement in future events.



## After the event

- + **Analyze** your event's energy consumption: at which moments could it be reduced in the future, where might additional capacity be needed, and what are the possibilities for covering part of the energy demand with renewable energy solutions.
- + Set a deadline for when all large **digital files related to the event will be deleted** from the web (or archived, if needed), in order to reduce digital waste.

**Good example:** At the Tallinn and Tartu Street Food Festivals between 2015 and 2018, the energy use of 75 food vendors was optimized as follows.

- + Before the event, the maximum energy demand was assessed (including non-operational hours).
- + Vendors were placed on the event site based on their energy needs, ensuring those requiring continuous electricity had access to grid connection overnight.
- + During non-operational hours, electricity use was switched to the grid to minimize the use of generators.
- + Additionally, the organizers installed shared refrigerators on site, where vendors could store their ingredients overnight.



---

More information about planning environmentally friendly energy use in [this instructional video](#) (15 min).

---



# 4. Catering and Water Use

## Food and Water

If you are offering food at your event,  
try to prefer:

- + **Plant-based food** –  
growing plants causes less harm to nature than meat.  
*(For example: vegetables, fruits, beans, grains.)*
- + **Organic food** –  
grown without harmful chemicals.
- + **Local food** –  
grown nearby, so no long travel needed.  
*(For example: order from a local farm.)*
- + **Seasonal food** –  
grows right now  
and doesn't need long storage.  
*(For example: strawberries and cucumbers in summer,  
pumpkins and plums in autumn.)*
- + **Fair trade products** –  
made in a way that is fair to people and nature.  
*(These products have "Fairtrade" written on them.  
These products are, for example, sugar, cocoa, coffee.)*

Don't order too much food.

Let people take leftovers home.

Offer tap water in jugs whenever you can.

At public events in Estonia, you must use reusable plates, cups and cutlery.

Single-use dishes are not allowed!

*(This rule is written in the Packaging Act.)*

## General principles

Food production has a significant environmental impact, so menu choices can greatly affect an event's sustainability. The best options are:

- 1) Reducing food waste
- 2) Offering more plant-based (vegan) meals
- 3) Choosing certified organic food (local or imported)
- 4) Choosing Fair Trade coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, etc.
- 5) Offering local and seasonal produce
- 6) Reducing packaging — avoid disposable dishes, bottled water, and individually wrapped food

By law, for all public events in Estonia it is **mandatory to use reusable tableware and cutlery!** (Packaging Act § 5 section 8)

A public event is any event held in a public place and open to the public. You can read more about the definition of public event and its examples on the Estonian Ministry of Climate's website [here](#).

## Reusable tableware and cutlery

### Main requirements

- + Tableware and cutlery must be safe for human health, meaning they must be accompanied by **documentation proving their suitability for contact with food**. At events, the responsibility to provide such proof lies with the supplier of the tableware — this may be the tableware service provider or a caterer using their own dishes.
- + Plastic dishes designed for single-use cannot be considered reusable tableware, even if reused. Information about the suitability of plastic tableware and plastic cutlery for reuse can be found, for example, in the **declaration of conformity**. More information on the declaration of conformity is available on the [website](#) of the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board and the [website](#) of Centre of Estonian Rural Research and Knowledge
- + Tableware and cutlery must be actually reused, which means that after every event, their **return, cleaning, and reuse must be ensured**.
- + Reusable tableware is defined as serving containers that retain their shape, such as bowls, cups, and plates. Napkins and paper pockets are not considered reusable tableware, so their use is permitted. Reusable cutlery includes knives, forks, spoons, and chopsticks. Drinking straws and toothpicks do not fall under this definition.
- + Disposable straws and stirrers made of plastic are prohibited. In general, their use, regardless of the material, should be avoided entirely. If straws are used, natural and/or reusable alternatives (e.g. made of reed or metal) should be preferred. Also in the case of reusable straws, proper collection, cleaning, and reuse must be ensured.

### Which system to use?

- + It is not always necessary to use a tableware rental service — a regularly occurring large event may choose to purchase its own tableware, and smaller events such as home café days can

also use ceramic dishes already available in homes.

- + The use of tableware should be as convenient and simple as possible for both the event participants and the food providers. The easiest and most effective solution is to have a **single tableware provider for the entire event and designated return point(s) for used dishes**. Tableware returns should not be the responsibility of individual food vendors. Ideally, the event organizer should manage a centralized tableware service rather than leaving it to the caterers. Multiple types of tableware and different return points can be confusing and inconvenient for visitors.
- + The use of reusable tableware should not be solely the responsibility of the visitor. While participants may be allowed to bring their own containers, the event must also offer an organizer-provided system, as it is a more practical and user-friendly option for most visitors.

**Good example:** Reusable glass shot glasses used for tastings at Kuressaare Street Festival 2025.

### Deposits and service fees

- + The law does not require deposits on tableware, but they can help with return rates. **Deposit amounts** must be clearly shown and **refunded in full**.
- + If there's a non-refundable service/handling fee, it must be clearly separated from the deposit sum and is subject to VAT.

### Responsibility and supervision

- + The event organizer is responsible for ensuring reusable tableware is used. They must provide clear information to caterers before the event on what kind of tableware system is used, ideally in written contracts.
- + Reusable tableware use is supervised by local municipalities and the Estonian Environmental Board. Food safety is supervised by the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board.



**Good example:** Bilingual signage about reusable dishes at the 2023 Youth Song and Dance Celebration.



Reusable tableware return signs can be downloaded [here](#).

For more detailed requirements regarding the use of reusable tableware — what is and isn't allowed — please refer to the Estonian Ministry of Climate's website [here](#), and for food safety guidelines, consult the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board's website [here](#).



### Environmentally friendly food choices

The highest climate impact in food production comes from meat and dairy products. By reducing the share of animal-based ingredients and offering more fully plant-based alternatives, your event will already be more environmentally friendly. Transport generally accounts for a small portion of food's environmental impact — how the food is produced is far more important. Therefore, whenever possible, choose products with organic certification. Local food doesn't always have a lower environmental impact than imported food, but it's worth prioritizing to support Estonian producers. The Fair Trade label ensures that people who produce goods like coffee, tea, sugar, or cocoa in other parts of the world, are paid fairly and their rights are respected.



**NB!** When it comes to meat and fish products, there is, however, a big difference in what kind of meat or fish to offer. Check [Lihafoor](#) (Meat Guide) and [Kalafoor](#) (Fish Guide) to see which meat/fish products to prefer and which to avoid.

To verify if a caterer is certified for organic food provision, check the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board's supervision system [here](#). (by selecting organic catering from the drop-down menu).



**Good example:** Tallinn's environmental [criteria for restaurant meals](#) (screenshot from the guide) — vegan food, organic food, grass-fed meat or wild game, sustainable fish.

#### RESTORANITOITUDE KESKKONNAMÕJU KVALITATIIVSE HINDAMISE RAAMISTIK KOOSNEB NELJAST KRITEERIUMIST

##### KRITEERIUM 1

VEGANTOIT



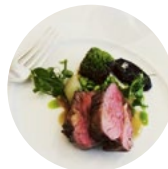
##### KRITEERIUM 2

MAHETOIT



##### KRITEERIUM 3

ROHUMAA- VÕI  
METSLOOMALIHA



##### KRITEERIUM 4

JÄTKUSUUTLIK  
KALA



**Good example:** Nutritious and visually appealing fully plant-based buffet at the 2025 Green Events and Innovations Conference in London.



## Take into account dietary restrictions!

- + Caterers should provide nutritional information about food, more information about it can be found in the labeling e-manual [here](#), and more information about providing information about allergens in the same manual [here](#).
- + For smaller events, you can ask participants about dietary restrictions in advance.
- + It is recommended to always offer a plant-based alternative alongside cow's milk.
- + When offering **plant-based food**, make sure that it supports a **balanced and varied diet**. More information about plant-based diets can be found on the page by the Estonian Institute for Health Development [here](#).

## Reducing food waste

- + Reducing food waste means ensuring that food which is still safe and suitable for human consumption, is not discarded (not even into biowaste bin), but is instead eaten.
- + **Inform visitors in advance whether food will be offered** at your event and what kind (e.g. light snacks or a full meal at a reception). This helps people plan accordingly and avoid unnecessary food waste.
- + Plan food quantities realistically. On average, 10-20% of registered attendees do not show up for receptions and conferences. Therefore, **food quantities can be slightly smaller** than the estimated number of visitors.
- + Depending on the nature of the event, offer visitors the option to take **smaller portions** to reduce uneaten food left on plates.
- + Find a way to **redistribute unserved food** that is left over after the event. Depending on the type of event, you can offer it to visitors, staff, volunteers, deliver it to a local food sharing point, or donate it to people in need.
- + If you plan to offer leftover food to visitors, you may ask them in advance to bring their **own food containers**.
- + When redistributing food, **food safety rules** must be followed: use clean containers that seal properly and prevent leaks, store food on clean surfaces and never on the floor, maintain appropriate temperatures during storage and transport (e.g. refrigerate perishable items and keep them out of direct sunlight).
- + If you take packaged food to a **food sharing point**, it is good practice to label the container(s) with the preparation date and note whether the food contains allergens. If the type of food is not immediately obvious, include the name of the food as well.

More on food donation from the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs [page](#) and the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board [page](#).

**Good example:** I Land Sound's food distribution cart, where visitors leaving the festival could put and take leftover food. The food still left in the cart went to the team kitchen. →

**Good example:** Viljandi Folk Music Festival has been cooperating with the Viljandi Food Sharing since 2021. All the food left over from the team meals is packed in small boxes and jars and transported to the cupboard with the help of volunteers, from where both the festival participants and the city dwellers can take food.



## Before the event

- + Decide what kind of **reusable tableware system** you will use at your event and who your tableware partner will be. Share this information with the caterer(s) well in advance, and prepare instructions and support materials as needed (e.g. a visual diagram showing how the dishes move through the event).
- + If your event takes place over a large area with many caterers, be sure to plan **multiple tableware return points** — both near the food courts and by the exit(s).
- + Include the reusable tableware requirement in the **contract(s)** with the caterer(s), along with the consequences or enforcement measures in case the requirement is not met.
- + Review your food selection — does it take into account different dietary requirements? As a minimum, the menu should include at least one **nutritionally complete plant-based main dish**.
- + Ask the caterer(s) to provide their menu in advance. It still happens that some caterers misunderstand what plant-based options or seasonal ingredients mean, so it's best to check beforehand.
- + **Assign a team member** to be responsible for planning what happens to leftover, unserved food. Will it be given to visitors, the team, volunteers, or placed in a local food sharing point? Who will pack it, in what containers, who will deliver it, and when?
- + If you have many caterers, it's a good idea to hold a **briefing call** to go over the rules — such as how the reusable tableware system works at your event and what to do with the leftover food.
- + Plan how participants and performers will get **tap water** at the event. Are there easily accessible taps, or does the water need to be brought in containers? Should visitors bring their own bottles, or will glasses be provided on-site? Adjust your communication accordingly — e.g. let visitors know to bring a bottle, and prepare signs and indicators showing where drinking water is available.
- + Examples of visitor-facing signage about reusable tableware, reducing food waste, and drinking water can be found [here](#).

**Good example:** concrete steps for caterers on how to order tableware in Startup Day sustainability guide 2025 (screenshot from the guide).

### PARTNER FOR REUSABLE DISHES, CUPS AND CUTLERY IS RINGO. REUSE FEE WILL APPLY FOR RENTAL DISHES.

Deadline for ordering your dishes, cups and cutlery is **15.01.2025!**  
Orders after the deadline may be possible by extra charge, but are not guaranteed.

Check out the selection of reusable dishes from Ringo: <https://orders.ringo.eco/>



## During the event

- + Just before the event starts, it's a good idea to hold a **briefing with the organizing team** — reusable tableware must also be used by the team itself, and should be preferred over disposable alternatives.
- + **Assign a team member** to supervise the caterer(s) and ensure that all rules are followed on-site.
- + Make sure that **information** signs about deposits, tableware return points, drinking water locations, and other important points are **clearly visible and easy to understand for visitors**.
- + If possible, observe **what kinds of food are left uneaten** — on visitors' plates or serving trays — so you can better plan portions and menus with caterers next time. Document leftover food amounts (e.g. take photos or weigh them, if possible).

## After the event

- + Collect **feedback from the caterer(s)** about the visitors' experience with both the tableware and the food — what worked well and what didn't.
- + Review the **tableware return statistics** — how many items were lost, what may have caused this, and what could be improved next time.

Waste management points regarding catering are covered in the next chapter.



---

More information about how to organize your catering in a more environmentally friendly manner in this [instructional video](#) (26 min).

---





# 5. Waste Management

## Trash and Waste

The less stuff you use,  
the less trash you make.

Put out separate bins for different kinds of waste:

- + paper and cardboard,  
*(like cardboard boxes)*
- + packaging,  
*(like plastic containers and cups)*
- + biowaste,  
*(like food scraps)*
- + deposit bottles and cans,  
*(like empty drink cans and bottles with a deposit)*
- + other waste or mixed waste.  
*(things that don't fit in any of the bins above)*

In Estonia, sorting your trash is required by law.

This rule is written in the Waste Act.

## General principles

The best kind of waste is the kind that is not generated. This means that, what you need to plan for in the event waste management, is largely influenced by the types of materials used at the event (see the chapter on Materials and Procurement). It's not possible to eliminate waste entirely, so these principles should be followed.

- + As much waste as possible should be recycled — collect and sort waste by type.
- + The amount of mixed waste (waste that cannot be recycled) should be continuously reduced.

## Sorting waste by type is mandatory in Estonia! (Waste Act § 31)

More specific requirements are defined in each **municipality's waste management regulation**, which can be found on the municipality's website and in Riigi Teataja.

At every event, it is not necessary to collect all possible types of waste — it should be based on the **types of waste actually generated at the event**. For example, event visitors typically don't produce paper or textile waste, so there's no need to collect those from them. However, paper waste is often generated by the production team and caterers, so appropriate containers should be available for them.

A sorting guide explaining which items go into which bin can be found [here](#).

**NB! E-cigarettes are electronic waste and must NOT be disposed of with other types of waste.** Especially at longer outdoor events, it is recommended to set up a separate collection point for e-cigarettes so they can later be taken to a waste station or handled by a partner responsible for their collection and disposal.

For waste sorting, it is recommended to use nationally developed waste bin signs, which are available for download in three languages from this [page](#).



### Why are the same waste bin signs important at every event?

Estonia has adopted a standardized style and color-coded system for waste bin signs (pictograms), which are consistent with those used in many other European countries. Using the same symbols and colors everywhere **helps people associate specific colors with the correct waste types**. The color alone allows people to recognize the bin from a distance, reducing the need to think about which bin to use — this makes correct sorting easier and helps turn the behavior into an automatic habit.

### How many waste bins should an event have?

There is no single formula — it depends on the type of the event. At events spread over a large area, more waste bins may be needed, even if they don't fill up quickly, simply to prevent people from having to carry their trash for too long. It's also important to consider **where waste is most likely to be generated** — such as in food courts, where there should be a higher number of biowaste bins alongside other waste categories. Similarly, biowaste bins should be located near reusable tableware return points.

Ideally, a visitor should be able to see at least one waste bin from anywhere within the event area.

**Good example:** At Startup Day 2023, the waste collection points were combined with the reusable tableware return points. A separate bucket was provided for cocktail leftovers (ice cubes, lemon slices, etc.) to prevent liquids from ending up in trash bins and leaking onto the floor.



## Involving Green Ambassadors

To improve the accuracy of waste sorting and prevent incorrect items from ending up in the wrong bins, volunteers known as **Green Ambassadors** are often involved. They assist people next to waste bins and help guide them in sorting their waste correctly. When involving Green Ambassadors, keep the following in mind.

- + Green Ambassadors should be friendly and communicative people **who are willing to initiate conversations** when needed, and are more likely to make eye contact than avoid it.
- + Although there are many dedicated underage volunteers, it is generally recommended to recruit **adults** as Green Ambassadors, as they are better equipped to handle possible confrontational interactions with visitors.
- + Since volunteer work is unpaid, it's important to consider a motivation package for Green Ambassadors — this might include a designated rest area during the event, a special thank-you event, or other gestures of appreciation.
- + For more information on recruiting, training, and managing volunteers, see the guidance materials available [here](#).



**In the photo:** Green Ambassadors at the I Land Sound Festival 2022.

### Before the event

- + **Assign a team member** to be responsible for the event's waste management. As this area involves contact with many parties, be aware that this can be a fairly labor-intensive role.
- + Review your event's organizational stages: **what types of waste are generated at which stages?** For example, stage setup before the event may produce construction waste; during the event, caterers preparing food may generate biowaste and packaging waste; during teardown, broken electronics may be left over — these are classified as hazardous waste.
- + Plan waste **collection based on where waste is generated** and by type: before the event, provide collection points close to the production team; during the event, it's generally best to collect waste from traders and caterers in a separate area not accessible to visitors.
- + Make **agreements with the waste handler early**. To know how much waste your event generates — and whether that amount increases or decreases year by year — consider including a clause in the waste contract requiring a report on the types and volumes of waste collected.
- + Include the requirement for separate waste collection in **contracts with partners** (traders, caterers, expo booths), along with enforcement measures in case the requirement is not met.
- + Determine **who will be responsible for emptying bins and containers** during the event — will it be the waste company, the venue's cleaning staff, your own team, or someone else? Cleaners may also need a briefing on where to take separately collected waste.
- + Consider how you will handle **hazardous waste** generated at the event, such as e-cigarettes: where and how will you collect it, and will you deliver it to a waste station yourself?
- + If desired, recruit volunteer Green Ambassadors for your event and brief them ahead of time.

## Why should traders and caterers put their waste separately from visitors?

We recommend providing a dedicated area for traders and caterers to dispose of their waste. This is because they generate different types of waste (e.g. large food packaging, cardboard boxes) and in **larger quantities than visitors**. Keeping these waste streams separate ensures that visitor bins don't fill up too quickly and allows better control over whether traders and caterers are sorting their waste correctly.

### During the event

- + Collect waste in **transparent bags** (unless it is placed directly into a container), as this helps ensure that the correct types of waste end up in the right place and don't get mixed up.
- + Make sure all bins have clear signs on them and are placed in **visible locations** for visitors.
- + **Hold a briefing** for all on-site partners (production team, traders, caterers, bars, etc.): does everyone know which types of waste must be sorted, where to take their waste, and whether they have proper sorting bins in place (e.g. inside food trucks)?
- + **Document** the situation during the event (take photos and notes if needed). Where are bins overflowing? Where do they remain mostly empty? Where are people throwing trash on the ground? Which items seem to cause confusion? This will help improve waste management planning for future events.

**Good example:** Campsite waste collection point at the I Land Sound festival 2022, where visitors generate nearly all types of waste. A simple plastic barrel was used to collect non-deposit glass bottles, as glass would likely break in a standard trash bag. The signs were large and clearly visible from a distance, and transparent bags were used.



### After the event

- + **Analyze** what worked well and what didn't, and write down improvement suggestions for the next time.
- + If you have **waste data** from previous years, compare it. Was more or less waste generated this time? What might have caused the difference? How could things be done better next time?



---

More information about how to organize waste management at events in this [instructional video](#) (18 min).

---

# 6. Local Environment and Community

## Community and Area Around the Event

When you have an event outside,  
it always affects the surroundings:

- + the place where the event happens,  
(for example: a park, a street, or a public square)
- + people who live or work near the event.

If you want people in the area  
to like your event,  
you should not disturb anyone:

- + music should not be too loud,
- + there should not be too many cars,
- + there should not be too much noise.

The event should also give something good to the local people:  
tell your guests to visit local shops and cafés.

After the event, clean up everything.  
Make the area look just as nice as it was before  
— or even nicer.

## General principles

Considering the local community and surroundings is especially important for outdoor events. However, all events (except those held entirely online) may have some impact on the immediate environment in which they take place.

There are two main goals to aim for:

- + the **natural environment** of the event site should remain in the same — or even better — condition after the event than it was before,
- + the event should cause minimal disturbance to the everyday lives of people living nearby and should preferably have a **positive impact** on the local community.

### **Potential negative impacts on the community and surroundings**

- + Noise pollution — e.g. excessively loud music, fireworks, generators
- + Light pollution — e.g. nighttime lighting, fireworks
- + Air pollution — e.g. generators, fireworks
- + Water and/or soil pollution — e.g. leakage of chemicals such as cleaning agents into water or soil
- + Landscape damage — e.g. littering, damaged grass areas, harm to vegetation
- + Disturbance to wildlife — e.g. noise, lights, and large crowds can disturb local birds and animals or destroy nesting areas
- + Disruption of mobility of local people — e.g. road closures, traffic congestion, reduced parking availability
- + Limited access to essential goods for locals — e.g. at large events, local stores may become overcrowded
- + Other disturbances to local residents — e.g. visitors entering private property or being noisy near residential areas

### **Potential positive impacts on the community and surroundings**

- + Additional income for local businesses — accommodation, catering, basic goods, etc.
- + Enrichment of local cultural life
- + Community engagement — e.g. involving local residents in event planning or volunteering
- + Improvement and increased usability of the event location — e.g. a new swimming pier, flower beds, repaired roads
- + Enhancement of biodiversity at the event site — e.g. sowing native meadow plants, planting suitable tree species

You can make a similar list based on the specifics of your event to see how to mitigate the potential negative impacts of your event and increase the positive impacts.

### **Event in a nature conservation area**

Organizing an event in a protected area requires separate approval from the Estonian Environmental Board. If you are planning an event in nature, check whether this requirement applies to your location as well. More information is available on the Environmental Board's website [here](#).

### **Fireworks as a disappearing form of entertainment**

In Estonia, several municipalities have already stopped using fireworks and/or banned them at public events. Considering the negative environmental impacts — such as noise, airborne chemicals, and the stress caused to animals and some people (e.g. war refugees) — it is entirely reasonable to avoid using fireworks and instead seek alternative ways to create memorable experiences at your event.

The same principle applies to confetti, balloons, and other single-use decorative items that can end up harming the surrounding environment, and should be avoided.

## Before the event

- + Familiarize yourself with the **requirements of the municipality's public event permit**, where your event takes place. These are usually available on the municipality's website.
- + **Identify the potential negative impacts** your event may have on the local environment and community, and plan actions to minimize them.
- + **Inform local residents about the event well in advance** — what will take place and what it may involve (e.g. changes in traffic arrangement). Use communication channels most commonly used by the community (e.g. the local cultural centre's notice board, neighborhood Facebook group). If needed, deliver personal notices (e.g. flyers in mailboxes).
- + If your event is outdoors, consult with the municipality's environmental specialist — or, if necessary, involve a nature conservation expert or ecologist — to assess the **condition of the natural environment**, and identify sensitive areas or species that need to be considered during event planning.
- + For outdoor events involving construction or transport, review which vehicles will be used, where and how they will move, to **avoid unnecessary damage to the landscape**.

## During the event

- + **Assign a team member** to be responsible for ensuring that pathways are clearly marked and that visitors are directed away from environmentally sensitive areas or private property belonging to local residents.
- + Make sure **clear instructions** are visibly posted for visitors, explaining **what activities are allowed or prohibited** in the event area (e.g. no feeding of birds, only natural detergents allowed at campsite washing stations).

## After the event

- + **Give local residents the opportunity to provide feedback** on the event and suggest improvements. Be sure to respond to their feedback in a suitable format — such as on your website, via email replies, or in the local newspaper.
- + If it is a recurring event, consider organizing a **dedicated meeting with representatives of the local community and municipality** to discuss ways the event could contribute positively to the community.
- + For recurring outdoor events, it may be worth organizing a **community clean-up** or maintenance day that not only prepares the site for future events but also makes the area more pleasant and accessible for local residents.



**Good example:** The I Land Sound festival has taken several steps to ensure that it is well-received by local residents.

- + Local people have the option to purchase a special “local resident” festival pass.
- + During the festival, access to the public beach — located within the festival area — is maintained.
- + The festival has provided “Private Property” signs for locals who wish to mark their land.
- + Community clean-up days have been organized to tidy up the festival grounds, which are otherwise a public area used year-round.



**In the photos:** I Land Sound community clean-up day 2023 (source: I Land Sound Facebook page).



More information about how to consider the community and surroundings when planning an event in this [instructional video](#) (15 min).

# 7. Accessibility

## Accessibility

An accessible event means that everyone can take part equally — including people with disabilities.



People with **mobility impairments** may need:

- + wide doors and entrances,
- + ramps and handrails,
- + a lift or platform lift (if possible),
- + accessible toilets.



People with **visual impairments** may need:

- + braille signs,
- + guiding paths and markings on the ground,
- + spoken descriptions.  
(*someone is speaking about what can be seen*).



People with **hearing impairments** may need:

- + sign language,
- + hearing loops,  
(*a system that connects with hearing aids*)
- + subtitles on videos,  
(*spoken words shown as text at the bottom of the screen*)
- + live captioning.  
(*spoken words shown as text on a screen in real time*)



People with **intellectual disabilities** may need:

- + texts written in plain language,
- + clear and simple signs.

Accessibility helps everyone,  
not just people with disabilities.  
(*For example: older people, parents with small children.*)

Try to make your event as accessible as possible!

Tell your guests  
what accessibility options your event has.

Put this information on your website  
and share it on social media.

## Before the event

- + **Assess the current state of accessibility.** What accessibility solutions are already in place? What could be added to improve access to the event? If accessibility has not been previously addressed, you can evaluate the situation using the [assessment form](#) developed by the Estonian Ministry of Culture or by involving an [external expert](#).
- + **Develop an accessibility improvement plan** for the event, outlining: goals; actions (including communication activities); timeline; responsible persons; partners to collaborate with on accessible solutions; and principles for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan.
- + **Assign a team member** as an accessibility coordinator to ensure the actions remain a clear, consistent, and well-integrated part of event planning.
- + **Train your team and partners** so that they understand how to incorporate accessibility principles into their respective areas of responsibility.
- + **Train volunteers and the information team** so they can provide accurate information about accessibility and communicate effectively with people with special needs.
- + **Think through how people using wheelchairs or other mobility aids will arrive to the event.** If visitors are arriving by bus or other transport, make sure the vehicles are accessible for people with mobility aids (e.g. wheelchairs).
- + **Think through how different accessibility target groups will move around the event area.** Which entrance will they use to access the venue? How will they move in the area? How will they locate the services intended for them (e.g. wheelchair zones, stroller parking, accessible parking, sign language or audio description areas, accessible toilets)? How will they access other services (e.g. catering or trading areas)? **Always involve representatives of the target groups — such as accessibility advisors with lived experience** — when designing and implementing practical solutions.
- + **Test all planned accessibility solutions together with representatives of the target group.** This helps avoid oversights such as placing a portable accessible toilet in a location that requires navigating over a curb, cable ramp, or other barrier.



- + **Plan your accessibility-related communication carefully and ensure that relevant information reaches as many people as possible.** Make sure accessibility information is easy to find on the event's website. Share event details through channels used by relevant audiences. On the website or other communication platforms, provide the name, email, and phone number of the accessibility contact person. Describe which accessibility solutions are available on-site (e.g. accessible toilets, sign language interpretation, wheelchair areas, dedicated stroller parking). Use appropriate symbols to make the information clear and more visually accessible.

### During the event

- + Ensure that accessible solutions are clearly marked and easy for visitors to find — for example, the location of accessible toilets, accessible parking, baby care rooms, or the area for audio description. Additional guidance is available from the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People.
- + Provide free entry for companions of visitors with special needs, and allow access to the event area with guide dogs or assistance dogs.
- + Assign team members or volunteers on-site to assist and guide visitors, and to monitor the functionality of accessibility solutions.

### After the event

- + Collect feedback from participants regarding the accessibility solutions provided. Several ticketing platforms allow follow-up emails where you can share information or request feedback.
- + Collect feedback from your team and partners about the accessibility solutions and draw relevant conclusions for future improvements.

**Good example:** The "Erisuste Erinevused" festival provided clear and detailed [accessibility information](#).

## Ligipääsetavus

Kanuti Gildi SAAL on festivali ajal ratastooli või käimisabivahendiga külastajale ligipääsetav - paigaldatud on kaldteed.

Palun registreeri oma osalus (ja ratastooli- või käimisabivahendi koht saali esimeses reas) [siit!](#)

Lavastuse "Kustpoolt puhub tuul" etendustele ratastooli- või käimisabivahendi koha pileti saab osta [siit!](#)

Ratastooli ja käimisabivahendi kohad asuvad saali 1. reas.

Lavastuse "Kustpoolt puhub tuul" 22.märtsi etendusel (kl 19.30) ja 22.märtsi vestlusel "Kuulmispuue ja etenduskunstid" (kl 13.30) on eesti viipekeelne ja kirjutustõlge.

21.märtsi vestlusel "Erivajadustega inimeste etenduskunstid" on kirjutustõlge.

Kirjutustõlget saab jälgida enda nutiseadmest või arvutist. Eelregistreerimisel on olemas piiratud hulgal tahvelarvuteid kohapeal.

Teiste vestluste eesti viipekeelseks või kirjutustõlkeks palume täita kuni 17.märtsini registreerumislehe - [siin!](#)

Kanuti Gildi SAALI publikuosale on festivali ajaks paigaldatud silmusvõimendi.

Lavastuses "Kustpoolt puhub tuul" kasutatakse kirjeldustõlke elemente ja on jälgitav nii visuaalselt, kui kuuldeliselt.

Kanuti Gildi SAALI ees asub festivali ajal ligipääsetav WC.

KOHA KIRJELDUS:

Sissepääs Kanuti Gildi Saali.

Address Pikk tänav 20.



Uksest sisse tultes on väike ruum.

Paremal on infolaud.

Infolaua taga on installatsioon. Sinna pääsemiseks küsi abi infolauast.

Vasakul on WC.



Saali jõudmiseks astu otse edasi.

Vasakule jääb garderoob, kuhu saad oma üleriided jätta.

Paremal on baarilet.



Kui seisad seljaga baarileti poole, siis sissepääsud saali jäävad paremale ja vasakule. Vasakult sisenevad ratastooli ja liikumis-abivahendiga külalised.



More information about accessibility is available in this instructional video: [Accessibility Through the Lens of Four Types of Disabilities](#) (6 min).

SUB



# 8. Communication

## Communication

If you want to protect nature at your event, you need to tell everyone involved:

- + your team,
- + vendors and traders,
- + caterers,
- + volunteers,
- + local people,
- + event guests,
- + journalists and photographers.

Talk with your team about:  
how your event will protect nature,  
how you will share this information with others.

Only talk about what is really being done.

Don't promise things you aren't sure about.

Events that protect nature  
and are accessible to everyone  
will bring in more happy people.

## General principles

For our environmental efforts to be effective, communication is essential. **The target groups in communication include all stakeholders:**

- + Your own organizing team
- + Partners (caterers, vendors, production team, sponsors, etc.)
- + Volunteers
- + Local community
- + Visitors
- + The media

Not all of these groups need to receive the same information. In environmental communication, it is important to carefully consider what each group needs to know, in what format, and at what time.

## Communication with the team and volunteers

Effective and consistent communication starts with the event's main organizer and core team embracing environmental principles and integrating them into every stage of planning. This means the **entire team — from the leadership down — understands the key environmental actions** being taken and the reasons behind them. It is important that the team reaches a shared understanding before any external communication about environmental efforts begins.

Communication is not limited to public written messages for visitors — it also includes the **visual language of the event, design elements, images, and informational materials** used to convey messages. The **behavior of the team also plays a key role**. For example, if the team shares social media content showing disposable tableware in staff areas, then this contradicts a public message stating that only reusable tableware is allowed.

**Brief volunteers at least twice** about environmentally friendly behavior expectations — once during recruitment or training, and again right before or at the beginning of the event.

For communication with local residents, refer to the chapter Local Environment and Community.

## How to avoid greenwashing

Greenwashing means presenting your environmental efforts as greater or more impactful than they actually are. To avoid unintentionally greenwashing, it's important to follow these guidelines.

- + **Avoid vague and overly broad statements** like “We are a green festival,” “We offer environmentally friendly transport,” or “We use eco-materials.”  
These statements can be used if you include specific descriptions of what they mean. What exactly makes your event greener? What modes of transport are offered? What qualifies your materials as “eco”? This is a good opportunity to refer to ecolabels, background information, and other sources.
- + **Do not make claims unless you are certain they are true**. Every claim should be backed by a source, preferably from a neutral authority. (For example, a company simply saying its product is eco-friendly is not enough — look for certified ecolabels.)
- + **If you promise** to do a specific environmentally friendly action at your event, **make sure it is actually carried out**. If it isn't possible, be transparent and honest about the reason why.
- + Make sure **your team follows the same rules and expectations you set for visitors and partners**. For example, if you say leftover food must not be thrown away, this should also apply to food in the staff areas.

## Data and communication

**Collecting data** about your environmental activities **helps you better understand the real impact of your actions** — and allows you to communicate that impact with evidence.

- + To measure change, you must first document the starting point — your **baseline event** or **baseline year** — what is the current resource use. This gives you something to compare against in future events.

- + **Some data is not that hard to collect:** you can ask your waste handler for waste amounts; use energy meters to track electricity use; count plant-based menu items; or take photos of leftover food. All of these provide simple, useful insights.
- + If you want to assess more complex impacts — like transport-related emissions — you'll need more preparation. For example, gather data from visitors and partners about how they traveled to the event, then calculate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions based on that information. In such cases, it's often necessary to work with an environmental consultancy that provides this expertise.
- + Start by **collecting any data** you can. Seeing concrete changes in the numbers is motivating for your team and helps show the public that your actions have real impact.

**Good example:** The Song and Dance Celebration's waste data before and after introducing reusable tableware. The image shows the amount of mixed waste (non-recyclable) per person at the 2019 and 2023 events. Total waste dropped from 40 tons in 2019 to 22 tons in 2023. Since the number of participants was different, presenting waste per person helps make the data comparable.



### Before the event

- + **Include communication about environmental goals and actions as part of the overall event communication plan.** The event's messaging must align with its environmental objectives.
- + Involve the person responsible for communication early in the planning of environmental activities.
- + Schedule **meetings or briefings with the team and team leaders** to commonly discuss and internalize the environmental principles.
- + **Inform partners and vendors** about environmental rules and guidelines in writing — either during the **process of signing agreements** or well in advance of the event — so they have enough time to comply.
- + Prepare clear and **easy-to-understand instructions** for partners, visitors, etc. People take in information in different ways, so whenever possible, use visual materials (e.g. sample waste bin signs, site maps showing waste collection areas, guidance from your reusable tableware partner). Include contact details for partners and vendors to reach out with questions.
- + Prepare **infographics**, signage, and if needed, audio files to help convey environmental messages effectively during the event.

- + Share environmental rules and guidelines with visitors as early as possible — at least two weeks before the event. Repeat these messages regularly (including just before the event).
- + Brief volunteers multiple times about environmental goals, planned actions, and the expectations for their behavior.

## During the event

- + **Assign a team member** to be responsible for **guiding partners, vendors, and volunteers on environmental matters**. This helps avoid confusion and ensures clear communication reaches all participants.
- + **Remind production and setup teams, as well as vendors and partners, about environmental expectations and requirements — both at the start of the event and throughout its duration**. For example, people working at sales points may have been hired only for this event and may have not received environmental information from the person who signed the contract with the event organizer.
- + Place infographics that promote environmentally responsible behavior in visible and high-traffic locations at the event site. [Here](#) you can find a selection of signs explaining environmentally friendly practices for use at your event. Some examples include:



- + **Post reminders about environmental expectations** on the event's digital channels just before or during the event at appropriate times (for example, a reminder about using reusable tableware right before the lunch break at a conference).
- + Ensure that the promotion of partners and sponsors aligns with the event's environmental principles — for example, avoid posting images of single-use branded items if your event has committed to phasing them out.

## After the event

- + Share a summary of your environmental efforts and results with partners, sponsors, and vendors — include fact-based information and acknowledge their contributions.

- + **Communicate your environmental actions and outcomes to the public** (e.g. visitors, on your digital channels, or via the media). Make these summaries evidence-based. If visitors or the media offer critical feedback, respond honestly and openly — stick to what you know to be true and can back up with facts. Follow the principles outlined in the earlier sections on greenwashing and data communication.
- + **Clean and store any materials used for environmental communication** (e.g. signs, posters, table cards) in a **dry and secure storage space** so they can be reused at the next event. Keep a record of which materials have been stored and where, and make that information accessible to your team.

**Good example:** On the [Impact Day website](#), all environmental and sustainability actions are described in great detail, along with information on how their impact has been measured (screenshot taken in 2025).

### Want to learn more about our sustainability efforts?

<p><b>Sustainability Guidelines</b></p> <p>We have developed sustainability guidelines that we and our partners follow.</p> <p><a href="#">CHECK IT OUT</a></p>	<p><b>Impact Report 2024</b></p> <p>Read the full overview of key results and activities for Impact Day 2024 season.</p> <p><a href="#">DIVE INTO THE DETAILS</a></p>	<p><b>Impact Report 2023</b></p> <p>Read the full overview of key results and activities for Impact Day 2023 season.</p> <p><a href="#">DIVE INTO THE DETAILS</a></p>
---	---	---

**Good example:** The Estonian Fashion Festival has integrated environmental sustainability into the content of the event itself. In addition to detailing the event’s environmentally friendly organization on its [website](#), it also shares tips on how to be a more eco-friendly fashion consumer.

### KESKKONNAHOIDLIK KORRALDUS

Festivali programmi kõik sündmused korraldame keskkonnahoidlikult ning oleme selleks koostanud põhjaliku juhendi, mis kehtib nii meile endile kui ka kõikidele meie koostööpartnerele, disaineritele, modellidele ja osalejatele. Keskkonnahoidlikku korraldust järgime sündmuste tootmisprotsessi, ehituse, kujunduse, jäätmete, trükiste, toitlustuse, transpordi, meenete ja kommunikatsiooni osas. Meie eesmärk on lähiaastatel omandada rahvusvaheliselt akrediteeritud jätkusuutliku sündmuse sertifikaat. [TUTVU JUHENDIGA SIIN](#)

### TARBIJATE TEADLIKKUSE TÕSTMINE

Lähtudes eesmärgist moekultuuri üha jätkusuutlikumaks muuta, pakume publikule harivat lisaprogrammi, korraldame jätkusuutliku moe teemadel seminari Greenery ning koostöös Estonian Fashion Revolution’iga oleme välja töötanud Moesõbra ABC, mis pakub lahendusi ning innustab jätkusuutlikumaid valikuid tegema. [TUTVU MOESÕBRA ABC’ga](#)



More information about environmental communication at events in this [instructional video](#) (28 min).

# 9. Requirements and Recommendations for Caterers

## **Dishes**

At public events, you must use reusable plates, cups, and cutlery. The dishes must be clean and safe for food.

If you charge a deposit for the dishes, you must clearly write it next to the price.

You should also explain where to return used dishes and how to get the deposit back.

## **Waste**

Sort your waste into the right bins.  
(For example: *packaging, food waste.*)

Ask the organizer:

- + where to get water and electricity,
- + where to take your waste,
- + where to pour out used cooking oil.

## **Food**

If you serve fish or meat, choose types that are not harmful to nature.

Use organic food if you can.

Think about how to share any leftover food so it doesn't have to be thrown away.

## **Nature**

Use natural cleaning products.

Drive and park in a way that does not damage the grass or soil.

### Electricity

If you need electricity,  
tell the organizer early.

Use equipment that saves energy.

Turn off devices  
when you're not using them.

### Accessibility

Your food stall must be accessible to everyone—  
including people in wheelchairs, with strollers,  
and both tall and short people.

Make sure the menu is easy to see  
and easy to read.

### Tableware and cutlery

- + By law, for all public events in Estonia it is **mandatory to use reusable tableware and cutlery!** (Packaging Act § 5 section 8)
- + Reusable tableware is defined as serving containers that retain their shape, such as bowls, cups, and plates. Napkins and paper pockets are not considered reusable tableware, so their use is permitted. Reusable cutlery includes knives, forks, spoons, and chopsticks. Drinking straws and toothpicks do not fall under this definition.
- + Disposable straws and stirrers made of plastic are prohibited. In general, their use, regardless of the material, should be avoided entirely. If straws are used, natural and/or reusable alternatives (e.g. made of reed or metal) should be preferred. Also in the case of reusable straws, proper collection, cleaning, and reuse must be ensured.
- + Before the event, familiarize yourself with the event's rules regarding tableware. Check whether a central reusable tableware service provider has been appointed, how orders should be placed, and other relevant details.
- + **The tableware provider is responsible for ensuring that the dishes and cutlery are safe** for food contact, that appropriate documentation is available, and that the origin of the tableware and usage conditions are clearly known. If you are renting tableware, you must use it according to the provided instructions, store it correctly, and ensure traceability — it must be clear who you rented the tableware from.
- + **If you are serving food using your own tableware and cutlery, it is your responsibility** as the caterer to ensure that the tableware is safe for food contact, that appropriate compliance documentation is available, and that you



have systems in place for collecting, washing, storing, tracking, transporting the tableware and cutlery, and if needed, handling the deposits. More information about the declaration of conformity is available on the [website](#) of the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board.

- + Ensure that your sales point clearly informs visitors about the tableware system: where to return the dishes and cutlery, whether a deposit is charged, and how it can be reclaimed. Typically, the event organizer provides this signage. If not, downloadable templates are available [here](#).
- + If the event uses a deposit system or combines a deposit and a service fee, make sure the amounts are clearly and separately displayed alongside food and beverage prices. **A deposit is a refundable amount that must be returned in full to the customer.** A service or handling fee is generally non-refundable.
- + For detailed requirements regarding reusable tableware — including what is allowed and what is prohibited — consult the Estonian Ministry of Climate’s website [here](#). For food safety requirements, refer to the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board [here](#).
- + Be aware that all businesses handling food or food-contact materials must notify the Estonian Agriculture and Food Board of their activities (Food Act §7). You can find more information about this requirement [here](#).

## Waste

- + **Sorting waste by type is mandatory in Estonia!** (Waste Act § 31)
- + Ask the event organizer about the waste sorting system in place: **where should you dispose of your waste?** If you use a significant amount of cooking oil, is there a designated collection point on-site, or are you expected to take it to a waste station yourself?
- + Plan how you will enable **convenient waste sorting in your work area** (e.g. inside a food truck). At outdoor events, collecting biowaste in a bucket that can be emptied into a larger container may work well.
- + Cardboard boxes should always be flattened before putting them into containers to allow more waste to fit into them.



- + **Never pour wastewater directly into the ground or into the sewer system** — ask the event organizer where it should be properly disposed of.
- + Never pour used cooking oil into the ground or sewer system — ask the organizer whether there is a designated oil collection system. If not, take it to the nearest waste station yourself.

### Food choices

- + Check [Lihafoor](#) (Meat Guide) and [Kalafoor](#) (Fish Guide) and avoid products listed in the red category, as these are considered environmentally unsustainable.
- + Where possible, prioritize organic ingredients. Only products bearing the EU organic label can be classified as organic.
- + Whenever possible, choose Fair Trade-certified coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, and similar products.
- + Clearly provide allergen information, more information about it can be found in the labeling e-manual [here](#).
- + Reduce food waste — coordinate with the event organizer on how, where, and when any leftover, unserved food will be redistributed. Such food must be packed in clean containers and stored at an appropriate temperature until handover.



### Impact on local environment

- + Whenever possible, use ecolabelled natural cleaning products.
- + When moving your food truck or vehicle, make sure you do not damage the ground, such as grass or soil.

### Energy

- + If you need electricity at the event site, inform the organizer well in advance, including details about the power capacity you require.
- + Choose energy-efficient equipment whenever possible.
- + Use energy and resources sparingly — turn off lights when not in use, don't leave water running, and avoid unnecessary consumption.

### Accessibility

- + Ensure that your sales counter and/or catering area is accessible and usable for people with wheelchairs and strollers.
- + When preparing your menu, make sure it is simple and clear, including for visitors who may not speak the local language. Use a screen reader-friendly format if sharing the menu digitally.
- + Make sure the menu is clearly visible — this helps visitors read it more easily in low lighting or if they have visual impairments.