

TU Delft

GreenTU



GREEN EVENTS MANUAL

A Guide to Hosting Sustainable
Events at TU Delft

GreenTU - 2024



INTRODUCTION

Dear reader,

This manual has been designed and developed by GreenTU to help you with organising sustainable and environmentally friendly events at TU Delft and beyond. Over the past year, we have received many requests for advice on organising green events. In order to streamline our guidance, we have compiled all our recommendations into this comprehensive manual.

In cooperation with various associations and committees in Delft, we have evaluated several large events. This collaboration has resulted in valuable tips and recommendations, which are presented in the following sections:

- Food & drinks
- Decorations
- Merchandise
- Partners
- Community: raising awareness
- Social sustainability

As we continue to learn and develop new strategies for organising green events, this first manual serves as a working concept. We value your input and feedback. If you have organised an event and have recommendations or tips, please do not hesitate to contact GreenTU. Your insights will help us to strengthen and improve this guide.

Together, let's make every event a step towards a more sustainable future!

Marie-Anne & Tessa
GreenTU



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CHECKLIST
















Our goal is to make sure this manual is easy to understand and useful to everyone, whether you're just starting out and need some guidance or if your event already prioritises environmental sustainability. You can choose how much you want to engage with the material. This manual is a reference tool to help you find the information you need easily. It's split into two parts. The first is a practical checklist, while the second is all about in-depth explorations of key topics.

Before you get into the details of planning your event, let's start with a checklist. Take a moment to think about the areas where your event can make an impact, as every event is different. Remember, even the smallest step towards sustainability is a valuable step forward. This checklist is here to give you an overview of the topics and tips that can help make your event more sustainable. These tips all align with at least one of the four 2030 sustainability goals of TU Delft:








1. Carbon neutrality 
2. Climate adaptivity 
3. Circularity 
4. Contribution to the quality of life and biodiversity 

Food & Drinks




Make sure that your food and drink options are sustainable by:

- Follow the EAT Lancet diet guidelines for event catering or be more ambitious and offer vegetarian or vegan options only  
- Apply true pricing to help attendees make sustainable choices by including the carbon price in products or packaging that emit more carbon  
- Provide info cards showing the emissions of food products so that attendees can make a conscious decision about which food they pick 
- Request local, seasonal and organic food from your caterer  
- Request condiments in bulk instead of individual packaging  
- Use Fair Trade products (coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, etc.) when possible 
- Choose a sustainable beer brand (like Bavaria or Cornet)  
- Buy groceries at a local sustainable supplier (Rechtstreex, Lock O'Loop, Hoeve Biesland)   

Make sure to have minimum food waste by:

- Getting an accurate number of attendees and their meal preferences before the event, like asking them if they want a sandwich during a lunch lecture or if they bring their own when signing up  
- Offering adjustable portion sizes, like small/medium/large for attendees when they sign up  
- Planning what to do with leftover food (handing out, doggy bag) in advance  
- Serve drinks from large bottles or pitchers instead of individual packaging 

Make sure that your hard cup system runs smoothly by:

- Implementing a deposit or token-based system to increase cup returns 
- Ensuring proper cleaning and storage to keep the quality of your cups intact, e.g. storage should be air-tight 
- Regularly checking reusable cups for wear and tear to ensure the hygiene standards 

CHECKLIST

Decorations

- Use timeless banners without specific dates (but it can have a certain academic week shown if it is a recurring event) 🔄
- Opt for reusable decorations like streamers instead of balloons 🔄🌱
- Create streamers from old, leftover merchandise 🔄🌱
- Use plasticized posters for longer use instead of stickers and flyers 🔄
- Ask other associations for leftover decorations for a similar event 🔄
- Use second hand decorations 🔄🌱
- Donate leftover materials (e.g. wood) to faculties for student projects 🔄🌱🌱

Merchandise

- Choose items that will be used long-term (e.g., cutting boards, bicycle lights) 🔄
- Opt for sustainable materials 🔄🌱
 - Ask about eco-friendly materials (recycled, organic, etc.) 🔄🌱
 - Inquire about the environmental impact of the production process 🔄🌱🌱
- Consider local or social work companies for merchandise production like Stichting Stunt and student-run start-ups 🔄🌱
- Reduce variety in gadgets and focus on more quality 🔄
- Implement a pre-sale system to avoid overproduction 🔄🌱
- Use (timeless) stamps instead of festival bands to reduce waste 🔄🌱
- Assess leftover items from previous years before purchasing new merchandise 🔄🌱
- Provide sport items for a sport association or event to make sure it can be used more often 🔄🌱

Partners

When choosing a partner:
























- Ask potential sponsors about their plans to achieve Paris Agreement goals 🔄🌱🌱🌱
- Consider company selection based on sustainability certification 🔄🌱🌱
- Select local partners for food and drinks 🔄🌱

In your communication with a partner:











- Be upfront with partners about your own sustainability goals and how you want them to help you achieve that 🔄🌱🌱
- Include sustainability information in standard emails or partner manuals 🔄🌱🌱
- Suggest practical, reusable products for partner giveaways 🔄🌱
- Explain to partners what your expectations are about flyers, stickers, etc. 🔄
- Encourage partners to use public transport 🔄
- Collaborate with your partners to identify sustainability improvement opportunities for next events 🔄🌱🌱

CHECKLIST

Community: raising awareness

- Host workshops or symposia on sustainability to create awareness    
- Provide clear information about the sustainability of your event to attendees    
- Clearly label recycling stations and provide waste disposal instructions  
- Use posters and banners to share sustainability facts and tips    
- Share social media content about sustainable event practices    
- Be transparent about challenges and invite community feedback 
- Committees:
 - Choose eco-friendly materials for crew/committee merchandise 
 - Prioritise long-lasting or multi-purpose merch  
 - Use unisex clothing that can be passed on to the next committing, by stamping on the new committee year  

Social sustainability

- Provide materials and announcements in multiple languages 
- Create quiet areas or sensory-friendly rooms for long events 
- Use adjustable lighting to accommodate sensory sensitivities 
- Choose fully wheelchair accessible venues 
- Ensure enough space in seating plans for mobility 
- Use clear, large, high-contrast signs at appropriate heights 
- Offer a range of non-alcoholic drinks 
- Have trained staff to handle harassment or discrimination issues 
- Ensure diversity among speakers, performers, and participants 
- Make event content culturally sensitive and broadly relevant 

FOOD & DRINKS

How to manage food-related emissions?

TU Delft is switching to the EAT Lancet diet at our university canteens and catering places. If you're planning an event, it's a good idea to incorporate that as well. The diet includes some animal products (meat, fish, dairy and eggs) in small portions, but is mostly plant-based. This diet is healthy and environmentally friendly, with all the science to back it up. If you want to go the extra mile, you can make your event fully vegetarian or vegan.

One way to help your event attendees make sustainable choices is to apply true pricing principles. True pricing is a concept that involves calculating the full cost of a product by including not only the direct costs but also the hidden environmental and social costs. These hidden costs could include things like pollution, resource depletion, health impacts and fair labour practices. The idea is to show a more accurate reflection of the actual cost to society and the environment. This means you can make local ingredients more expensive, as they have higher transportation emissions. Also, animal products should cost more than plant-based products because they have higher greenhouse gas emissions, use more water and land, and are generally more expensive to produce.

If you think that making food and drink more expensive for unsustainable options doesn't fit with your event, you can also show attendees the impact of their food choices. So, you could provide an info card with the emissions of a product, so your event attendees can make a conscious decision.

What questions to ask your caterer?

You might think you have to go with whatever the caterer offers, but don't be afraid to ask about different options and what can be done.

- Ask for food that follows the EAT Lancet guidelines.
- Ask for a more sustainable menu with local, seasonal, and organic foods.
- Specify that you want sustainably harvested seafood and/or free-range meats, though serving no meat at all is a great option.
- Request condiments in bulk (like sugar, salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, peanut butter, jam, cream cheese, and butter) instead of individually packaged portions.
- Always request Fair Trade products, such as coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa products, and bananas.
- Arrange for the catering to be delivered using sustainable transportation methods.

Beer

Choose your beer thoughtfully! Since students consume a lot of beer, at least make sure it's sustainable. Luckily, sustainability is a priority for most Dutch breweries.

Some sustainable beer brands are:

- Royal Swinckels (which includes Bavaria and other brands) was the most sustainable beer brand in the Netherlands in 2023.

<https://www.biernet.nl/nieuws/swinckels-family-brewers-uitgeroepen-tot-sustainable-brewery-of-the-year>

- De Koperen Kat is a local brewery in Delft, and they have some special sustainable craft beers, including one with algae and one with rainwater. <https://www.dekoperenkat.nl/de-bieren/>

Where to get more sustainable food in Delft?

- Rechtstreex is a sustainable supermarket concept. They've got stores all over the Netherlands, plus one in the city centre of Delft. They source fresh produce from local farmers and other producers in the Delft region, and you can order food from them online and collect it when you need it. These products are local and seasonal! <https://www.rechtstreex.nl/delftcentrum>
- Lock O' Loop is a zero-waste shop in Delft. You can buy products in refillable packaging and bring the packaging back to the store later, so you won't have to worry about plastic waste! If you're planning a big event, Lock O' Loop also offers a bulk purchase option. <https://www.lockoloop.nl/>
- Hoeve Biesland is a biological farm close to Delft. They've got their own farm shop, selling meats, dairy products, baked goods and vegetables and fruits. They also offer catering services, so be sure to check them out for making your big event more local and seasonal! <https://hoevebiesland.nl/horeca-leverancier/>
- Foodsharing Delft is an initiative that picks up food waste from local shops and markets and distributes it using their communal fridge. This might not be the best option for a large event, but if you're planning a smaller gathering and don't need specific ingredients, the communal fridge is a great place to look. It's at Nieuwelaan 50, near the Sint Sebastiaansbrug. You can find out more at <https://foodsharingdelft.nl/>.

Minimizing waste

Besides thinking about what kind of food and drinks to serve at your event, it's important to consider what happens to the leftovers. Unconsumed food and drinks can also have a big impact, so figuring out how to minimize this waste is key.

Before the event

To cut down on food waste at your event, it's very important to get a good headcount beforehand. The more accurate your attendee numbers, the easier it is to figure out how much food you'll need. Instead of making your event completely open, have people sign up ahead of time. You could even charge a small fee for meals to ensure you get accurate numbers. Another good idea is to make food an option when people get their tickets. For instance, at a lunch lecture, attendees could check a box if they want the free lunch or plan to bring their own. To get even more precise, let attendees choose their portion size: 0.75 for a light eater, 1 for a regular eater, or 1.25 for a big eater.

During the event

Firstly, it is good to inform participants about the sustainable aspects of your menu to raise awareness about the food's origin and how to dispose of leftovers properly. This will emphasize the sustainability of your event! At your event, consider using adjustable portion sizes. This way, people can take as much food as they want and avoid half-eaten plates. Also, think about how you serve food and drinks. Instead of paper plates and cups, use reusable ones. If the event is on campus, you can get plastic plates, Billie cups, and glasses from the caterer Appèl. For smaller events, ask attendees to bring their own plates and cups. Also, remind everyone to bring their own water bottles and spread the word well before the event.

For drinks, try serving them in large bottles or pitchers. Providing drinks in bulk instead of single serve can cut down on waste. It is also good to ask the caterer to fill water glasses only upon request at seated functions instead of pre-filling them.

After the event

Think about how to handle leftovers. You could give them to visitors or employees at your location or provide "doggie bags" for people to take leftovers home. If you have prepackaged food from supermarkets, keep the receipt so you can return any unused items and get your money back.

Cups: hardcups and reusable cups

Some background information: impact of different cups

PP has the least environmental impact but isn't fully recyclable. PLA, despite being made from non-fossil materials, has the highest impact. rPET is the most circular material if recycled properly (clean and without ink). PP generally has more impact than recyclable rPET. However, reusable cups are the best option if they are used many times before being discarded. The effectiveness of reusable cups depends on low loss rates and efficient washing stations. If hard cups are used more than five times, they have a lower impact than recyclable cups.

Bioplastic cups and containers also fall under new regulations because large-scale composting isn't feasible yet, and the composting time for these materials often exceeds the turnaround time of composting facilities. Plus, compost from these materials doesn't always meet quality standards for soil enrichment.

The government prefers reusing over recycling for this reason. Cups and containers often contain plastic to make them water- and grease-resistant, even if labeled plastic-free. In the Netherlands, plastic-free means no added polymers, but this standard can vary internationally.

Best practices

The quantity

To manage cups at your event, you have two options:

1. Have 1.5-2 times the number of cups as visitors so you can keep enough clean cups behind the bar while washing used ones.
2. Have 8 times the number of cups as visitors so you don't need to wash them during the event. This is less sustainable but can be easier for large events. Suppliers often recommend this, and if you rent cups, they will be reused at other events.

Expect to lose about 10% of cups per event due to breakage or people taking them home.

To handle this:

1. Price your cups similarly to drinks (e.g., €1.25-2.00) so that lost cups are covered by the income.
2. Include the cost of a 10% loss in your event budget and ticket prices.

Returning the cups

When using reusable cups at your event, you need to decide whether to use a deposit system or a token-based return system for your cups:

- Deposit System: guests pay for the cup and get a refund when they return it.
- Token-Based System: guests get a token for a cup and return the cup to get the token back. Give a free token at entry, and charge at least €1 for a lost token to encourage returns and cover costs for lost cups.

Make sure to tell guests that tokens have no value after the event. To ensure the last cup gets returned, consider adding a second return incentive, like a free snack when you deliver 5 cups to the bar at the end of the event.

Cleaning and storage

Make sure to keep your cups super clean, especially if you're storing them for a long time. At the very least, give them a professional clean once a year. If you use them more often, aim for twice a year or even a monthly industrial rinse if possible. During an event, using cold water with the right soap can be enough for a quick clean. Just make sure to rinse them well to get rid of any soap residue and avoid any weird aftertastes. Although research suggests that warm hand-washing, or commercial washing is better, cold hand washing is safe if done right.

Drying the cups properly is crucial to avoid hygiene issues. No matter how you choose to clean them, regularly check for any signs of wear like cracks or scratches to keep them safe and hygienic.

DECORATION

Timelessness

To make sure your decoration can be reused, reducing costs and expanding the use phase, making your banner/product/decoration timeless is very beneficial. Here are some tips:

- If you would like to put the date on a banner, you can also introduce the 'week' to reuse it for next year if your event falls within the same week every year. For example; Q4 Week 1 instead of 12 May.
- Use association or organisation specific decorations, for example using the colours of your association.

Creative re-use

In an ideal situation, you can reuse your product every event or year, also reducing the costs of your props. Sometimes it helps to be a little more creative and think out of the box:

- Create decorations from old merchandise such as turning leftover shirts into garlands.
- Ask your other associations if they have leftover decorations. Often they have put a lot of time into creating props and artworks, so they also like to give it another use.
- Source decorations from second-hand stores.

After the event

After your event you will probably have quite some materials left. This is what you could do with it:

- Items like pallets can be repurposed for various uses. You can for example make other associations and organisations happy with them, or people within your community that can build couches from it!
- Many materials like wood leftover? Probably a faculty like IDE or BK can use this for building maquettes or prototypes.

Best practices

- Avoid single-use decorations like balloons. Instead use reusable items that can be stored and redeployed.
- Avoid use of stickers and flyers. Instead, use laminated posters that can be reused.



MERCHANDISE

How to manage merchandise-related emissions?

In order to monitor your carbon footprint, it is important to gather information from manufacturers about the environmental impact of your goods. In the next section we have identified some key questions to ask these manufacturers.

When distributing the merchandise, consider informing your audience about the benefits of choosing sustainable options and the positive impact these choices have on the environment. This information can be printed directly on items such as bags or T-shirts, or shared through social media channels. In this way, you can raise awareness and encourage more people to consider their environmental impact.

What questions to ask your manufacturer?

You may think you have to go with what the manufacturer offers, but don't be afraid to ask about different options and what can be done.

- What materials are used in the production of this merchandise, and do you offer environmentally friendly initiatives (such as recycled or organic materials?)
- What is the environmental impact of your production process?
- Do you have any certifications for sustainability?
- Can you provide a carbon footprint assessment of the merchandise?
- Do you offer any take-back or recycling programs for your products?

Focus on local!

The TU Delft community knows many entrepreneurs. There are probably a few students in your organisation or club who are running their own start-up. Why not choose some original merchandise and create something together with your own community to support these local start-ups! A few examples:

- Studio Haering: upcycling used up tents into sustainable bags (@studiohaering).
- Tassies met passies: bags made out of old kites (@tassies_met_passies).
- Tumi Tuyou: unique gilets made by women of tumi Ghana (@tumi.tuyou).
- Naaice: upcycling old banners and flags (@naaice).
- Stichting Stunt: upcycling old banners and supporting people distanced from the labor market.

Best practices

- Always assess what items are left over from previous years before purchasing new merchandise. You might be able to use them in a different form!
- From ID & BK: do screen printing for your events merchandise; bring your own shirt and screen print them on the spot.
- For sports associations; give the first years (brightly colored for water visibility specifically) items like sports shirts that can be reused for various activities.
- Offer fewer, but higher quality and more sustainable, merchandise options.
- Implement a pre-sale system to stimulate interest and avoid overproduction.
- Use stamps instead of festival bands; less waste for later and less costs!

PARTNERS

Choosing the right partners is essential to delivering a sustainable and environmentally responsible event. The partners you choose can have a significant impact on the environmental impact of your event, so it is important to consider their sustainability practices and values.

Choosing your partners

When selecting partners for your event, it's crucial to consider their sustainability practices. This ensures that their values align with your commitment to hosting sustainable events.

- Research potential partners' sustainability policies and practices. Look for companies that prioritize environmentally friendly operations, such as reducing emissions, using renewable energy, and minimizing waste.
- Ask potential sponsors about their plans to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. This demonstrates your commitment to sustainability and encourages your partners to prioritize these goals as well.
- Choose companies with proven sustainability records. This includes certifications like ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) or other recognized environmental standards.
- Consider local partners for food and drinks who have less transportation impact and contribute to the local economy.
- Advocate for partners and their employees to use public transport. This can significantly reduce the overall carbon footprint of your event.

Given the financial constraints often faced by student associations, it may not always be

feasible to choose a fully sustainable company. However, you can still promote sustainability by ensuring that the specific aspects of the event managed by the company are environmentally friendly. This can be achieved, for example, through clear and focused communication with your partners.

Communication to partners

Effective communication with your partners about sustainability goals is key to ensuring that everyone involved in the event is on the same page. Here are some tips:

- Include a page on sustainability in your client manual; what are your sustainability goals and what do you as an organization aim to achieve?
- Share your sustainability goals in conversations and agreements.
- Work collaboratively with partners to identify opportunities for sustainability improvements. This could involve joint initiatives like setting up recycling stations or using shared resources to reduce waste.
- Maintain regular communication with partners about sustainability efforts. Provide updates, share best practices, and recognize their contributions towards your sustainability goals.
- If your partners would like to hand out for example goodie bags or merchandise, help them by coming up with products that students will actually use instead of throwing them away later. This is better for the environment and the company, as a prolonged use phase means longer exposure of the brand!

COMMUNITY

Creating a sustainable event is not just about planning and logistics; it is also about engaging and educating your community. By raising awareness, implementing sustainable practices in crew and committee merchandise, and using social media, you can inspire positive behaviour and support for your green initiatives.

Awareness

Raising awareness within your community is essential for the success of sustainable events. Inform attendees, partners, and participants about the environmental impact of their choices and the steps you are taking to mitigate it.

- Host workshops or symposia that highlight the importance of sustainability.
- Provide clear and accessible information about your sustainability goals and achievements at the event.
- Clearly label recycling stations and provide instructions on proper waste disposal.
- Use posters, banners, and digital screens to share facts and tips about sustainability.
- Share posts, stories, and videos that detail the sustainable practices implemented in your event planning and execution.
- Highlight the environmental benefits of these practices and the positive impact they have.
- Be transparent about the challenges and areas for improvement, inviting feedback and suggestions from your community.

Crew/committee merch

The merchandise worn by your event crew and committees is a visible representation of your commitment to sustainability. Make thoughtful choices in the selection and distribution of these items.

- Choose merchandise made from friendly materials such as organic cotton, recycled polyester, or biodegradable fabrics.
- Avoid single-use items and prioritize products that can serve multiple purposes or be used long after the event.
- Best practice: use unisex clothing and stamp on the new committee year or committee name. In this way the clothing becomes a transferable item that has interesting history or maybe even some fun stories!



SOCIAL

When planning an event, it's important to consider not just environmental sustainability but also social sustainability. Ensuring that your event is inclusive, accessible, and safe for all attendees creates a welcoming and equitable environment. Here's how you can incorporate social sustainability into your event planning.

What can you do to make your event accessible?

When you are planning your event, it is always worth thinking about diversity and inclusion. Make sure you provide materials and announcements in multiple languages and offer translation or interpretation services if needed. It is a good idea to have quiet areas or sensory-friendly rooms for attendees who need a break from noise and activity if it is an event that lasts multiple hours. Make sure you use adjustable lighting so you can accommodate those with sensory sensitivities.

Accessibility should be a top priority, both online and offline. For in-person events, choose a venue that is fully wheelchair accessible, including all entrances, exits, restrooms, and event spaces. Make sure there is plenty of space to move around in the seating plan and use clear, big, high-contrast signs at the right height to help people find their way around.

If you have any questions or concerns about making your event accessible, you can reach out to Student Onbeperkt, a student platform for disabled TU Delft students. Their ambassadors can help you make your event more accessible. You can email them at studentonbeperkt@tudelft.nl.

What is the best way to make sure everyone's safe and happy?

To make sure everyone has a good time, make sure you have a range of non-alcoholic drinks available. It is also a good idea to include activities for people below the drinking age, so they can still have fun without accessing alcohol. To reduce the risk of bad behaviour, it is important to identify troublemakers early and reduce their anonymity. Having staff around who can see what is going on can help to stop such behaviour.

Make sure there are safe spaces where people can go if they feel uncomfortable or need support. Make sure you have trained staff or volunteers on hand to deal with any issues related to harassment or discrimination. Let attendees share their experiences and any accessibility challenges they faced via a feedback mechanism. Use this feedback to make future events even better.

If you are putting together a symposium, debate, lecture, etc.

To make your event accessible and inclusive, it is a good idea to make sure that your speakers, performers and participants are diverse. It is a good idea to include a variety of genders, races, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. It is also important to make sure that the content of your event is culturally sensitive and relevant to a broad audience. Also, make sure you have materials in different languages and provide translation services if needed to make sure everyone can take part.

GREENTU



GreenTU is the **green office** of TU Delft, part of the university's corporate office.

About GreenTU

TU Delft's goal is to make a positive impact on society. Making our operations more sustainable is a great way to make a positive impact. So, TU Delft is investing in making the campus more sustainable. Over the next few years, we'll be working towards making our campus carbon neutral, circular and climate-adaptive. We'll also be focusing on improving biodiversity and quality of life.

GreenTU is a green student initiative that works together with the university corporate office to make the campus more sustainable. We're a student organisation dedicated to promoting sustainability in education, research, operations and community at TU Delft!

We connect students with researchers, teachers and campus operators, and represent the student voice in TU Delft's sustainability plans - with the aim of improving TU Delft's sustainability performance as a whole.

The GreenTU board's goal for 2023-2024 was two-fold: to help TU Delft reach their 2030 sustainability goals and to support TU Delft's sustainability community. The board worked hard to make sustainability more accessible and inclusive for all students and employees, and to connect existing sub-communities. So, this green events manual is in line with the GreenTU '23-'24 vision. It gives practical tips to make organising a sustainable event easier. By including a community and social sustainability chapter, we're aiming to make TU Delft's green events more inclusive.

We would like to thank the associations/organisations below for their collaboration and input during the creation of this manual.

Delftse Studenten Roeivereniging

PROTEUS ERETES

STYLOS III

Events on campus
And others that contributed

Get in touch with us!

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