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Sustainability at Light Festivals

Sustainability Audit Guidelines for Light Festivals
an Imagine Peace Handbook



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1 Introduction

Sustainability, and even more so the process of sustainable development, is central to making our society and economy future-proof. At its core, acting sustainably means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the opportunities of future generations (Hauff, 1987). The concept of sustainability, understood as an integrative approach to **ecological, economic, and social** aspects, is ambitious and fraught with conflicts of interest, posing challenges for the scientific community.

Since sustainability affects all areas of life and the economy, the event and tourism sectors have increasingly recognized its importance. Societal pressure and the rising demand for sustainable offerings make it essential to integrate sustainability into cultural and entertainment activities. This involves aligning ecological, economic, and social considerations to achieve long-term balance and responsible resource use.

Light festivals, as prominent and resource-intensive events, often face criticism regarding their sustainability, particularly in the context of global environmental challenges. Resource and energy consumption frequently come under scrutiny. However, events like these play an important role in society by fostering cultural exchange, revitalizing public spaces, and strengthening community bonds.

To address these concerns, light festivals are encouraged to go beyond economic considerations and incorporate societal and environmental impacts into their planning and execution. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks concerning sustainability. A systematic **sustainability audit**, guided by scientific principles and aligned with established standards, can facilitate this process and is proposed in this document. This audit is intended to serve as a guidance to enhance sustainability considerations at festivals and foster continuous improvement. It does not represent a certification of sustainability but challenges organizers to make additional efforts to make their events more sustainable. Supplementing such audits with insights from stakeholder surveys, including residents and visitors, can further enhance the effectiveness of sustainability strategies.

The ultimate goal of such an audit is not the achievement of the highest possible score for each indicator and overall, but rather the **continuous improvement** of festivals, ensuring their alignment with the principles of sustainable development and their contribution to a more sustainable society.

2 The Triple Bottom Line of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability in its current understanding can be defined using the three-pillar model of sustainability. As described in Gibson's "Beyond the Pillars", sustainability is divided into the three areas of environment, economy, and society, which must, however, be viewed as an "interconnected unit" (Weber, 1998). Thus, sustainability is structured into the three dimensions of ecology, economy, and social equity, which are meant to exist in harmonious relation to one another. If this harmony is not achieved, sustainability cannot be considered fulfilled.

Ecological sustainability generally refers to the environment, flora and fauna, and the avoidance and reduction of irreversible impacts on natural resources. Natural resources should only be utilized at a rate that allows them to regenerate themselves, ensuring their availability for future generations without disrupting the ecological balance (Enquete Kommission, 1998).

For events, considering ecological sustainability means reducing resource consumption and minimizing the ecological footprint. Measures such as the use of renewable energies, promoting environmentally friendly mobility for attendees, and implementing efficient waste management can contribute to this goal. Often, the concept of sustainability is limited to the ecological dimension. However, sustainability also encompasses economic and social dimensions.

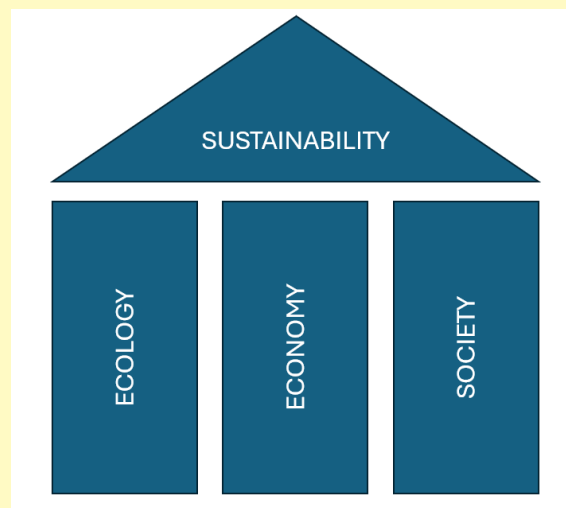


Figure 1: The Three-Pillar Model of Sustainability (Europäische Union, 1997)

Economic sustainability addresses the economic aspects, including balanced competition to meet the population's needs and the effective and efficient use of resources. It is important to understand that economy and ecology are not opposites but rather two areas that should be harmonized through the sustainability concept (Rennings et al., 1996).

For example, economic sustainability in events can relate to their financial stability by ensuring long-term planning and funding. Supporting local tourism and trade businesses and enhancing the quality of life are additional ways to improve the economic sustainability of an event.

Social sustainability focuses on areas such as integration, participation, and gender equality. It is both a result of and a prerequisite for the fair distribution of ecological and economic resources. The goal is to create an inclusive and equitable society.

In the context of festivals, this can be achieved by involving people from diverse backgrounds and needs, promoting cultural diversity, and creating a safe environment for all participants. The community-building aspect of festivals, which transforms cities and villages into attractive spaces for

living and social interaction, should not be underestimated. This is increasingly important in a globalized and digitalized world.

By adhering to the three-pillar model of sustainability, event planning and execution can achieve a balance among environmental, economic, and social factors, ensuring a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

3 Sustainability at Cultural Events

Cultural events are unique occasions that showcase a wide variety of artistic and cultural expressions, such as theater, concerts, exhibitions, or festivals. Compared to other types of events, such as sports or corporate gatherings, cultural events possess distinctive characteristics.

One key feature of cultural events is their artistic and cultural value. They provide attendees with the opportunity to engage with and experience various art forms and cultural traditions. By doing so, cultural events promote (inter)cultural education and foster understanding of diverse societal and cultural aspects.

These benefits of cultural events often take the form of intangible positive impacts, such as raising environmental awareness. As a result, public institutions or nonprofit organizations frequently support and organize cultural events. These organizers and sponsors often bear a greater responsibility for sustainability overall and actively strive to ensure the ecological and social sustainability of their events.

Cultural events often serve as platforms for social and political discussions. They provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and perspectives, encouraging dialogue between different communities and cultures. Additionally, they can highlight societal issues and raise awareness of important topics.

Overall, cultural events contribute to a diverse and vibrant cultural landscape and are a significant part of society's cultural heritage. Through their unique characteristics—such as their artistic and cultural value and their potential to spark social and political dialogue—cultural events play a crucial role in promoting education, integration, and sustainability.

4 The Sustainability Audit

A **sustainability audit** can be conducted to better understand an event's social, ecological, and economic impacts. This tool was originally developed by the University of Innsbruck for private companies. Subsequently, the Institute for Public Management at Eurac Research adapted the sustainability audit to events and festivals, relying on its previous experience and work conducted together with the trade association "Wirtschaftsverband hds" on event sustainability guidance (Bernhart et al., 2025; Wirtschaftsverband hds, 2024).

The sustainability audit enables a holistic analysis of a festival's sustainability status by addressing the three pillars of sustainability: economy, ecology, and social aspects. Each pillar is broken down into three dimensions: **management, processes, and results**.

- **Festival Management** includes the areas of leadership, strategy and planning, people, partnerships and resources. Actions and interactions of people are at the core of this dimension (Bernhart et al., 2012).

- **Festival Processes** are sets of interconnected activities that convert resources (inputs) into services (outputs) and impact on society (outcome). In this case, processes encompass activities implemented by the organizer to translate sustainability aspects defined in the management phase into practical actions.
- **Festival Results** refer to the achievements in terms of performance (such as energy consumption or media coverage) and outcomes (such as inclusiveness or accessibility). Measurements cover both measurable performance indicators and stakeholders' perspectives and perceptions.

The audit uses targeted questions to explore the three pillars within these dimensions through an **evaluation** conducted by a **jury** that includes the festival organizer, a scientific partner, an observer festival organizer, and a local representative. Each pillar and dimension include a set of criteria deemed relevant for assessing sustainability.

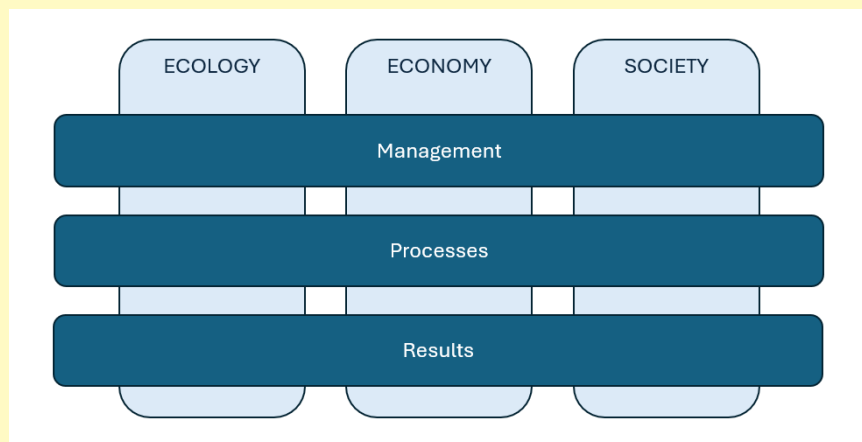


Figure 2: Sustainability Audit Structure (Bernhart et al., 2012)

4.1 Scoring Model

Each guideline within a given pillar and dimension is scored on a scale from 0 to 4, where:

- **0 scoring points** indicate very high potential for improvement, and
- **4 scoring points** indicate little to no potential for improvement.

The importance of each guideline is weighted from **1 to 4**, based on its **relevance**. This weighting is determined by comparing the guidelines until each is assigned a clear value. Weightings are determined by the jury before the festival and can be discussed and refined with stakeholders, such as representatives of local tourism organizations and biological associations. The weighting is then multiplied by the score achieved for each guideline, yielding a maximum of 16 **weighted points** per guideline. This **scoring model** systematically identifies areas where the festival already excels in sustainability and those needing further development.

The attribution of **scoring points** is the same for everyone and based on common scales. Differently, **relevance points** are decided before the festival by the jury. This ensures **comparability** while allowing for the consideration of the **context** of each festival.

Here is an example of the audit and the scoring model of the light festival “XY”:

- Before the festival, the jury attributes a relevance level of 4 to guideline C1.1. “Selection of Installation” due to its great importance. With a relevance level of 4, the potential weighted points that can be achieved for guideline C1.1. are 16. At the same time, the level of relevance of 2 is attributed to guideline C1.3. “Financial Planning”, which is an important issue for the festival but of minor concern. The potential weighted points that can be achieved for guideline C1.3. are therefore 8.
- After the festival, during the evaluation, the jury assessed that the festival organizers thoroughly observed the general quality of the concept, technical feasibility, and financial feasibility of the installations while selecting them. However, the jury decreed that the aspect of sustainability was poorly considered. For this reason, the jury decided to attribute 3 out of 4 scoring points for this guideline. The jury also stated that the financial planning was very sound, and no financial issue arose during the festival, granting this guideline the maximum score of 4 points.
- In total, the festival achieved 12 out of 16 weighted points for guideline C1.1. “Selection of Installation” and 8 out of 8 points for guideline C1.3. “Financial Planning”.

4.2 Maximum Scores

Each pillar of sustainability (economy, ecology, and social aspects) can achieve a maximum of **200 points**:

- **80 points** for management,
- **68 points** for processes, and
- **52 points** for results.

The “results” dimension carries fewer points because outcomes can be influenced by chance, are difficult to quantify, or cannot be adequately compared to similar events. The management dimension is given the highest weighting, as it lays the foundation for sustainable festival execution. Effective management ensures that sustainability principles are deeply embedded in the festival's organization and align most closely with the concept of long-term sustainability.

4.3 Interpretation of Results

After completing the audit, the percentage of total points achieved is calculated:

- **Over 90%:** The event has minimal room for improvement and is nearly fully sustainable.
- **70–90%:** The event is sustainably oriented but still has areas for improvement.
- **Below 70%:** Significant potential for improvement exists across most areas.

By providing clear insights into the strengths and weaknesses of a festival, the sustainability audit helps organizers identify actionable steps to enhance the festival’s alignment with sustainability goals.

4.4 Implementation and Adjustment of the Sustainability Audit

Events and festivals are not homogeneous entities. Therefore, sustainability audits for events can be adapted to the specific context of each event by attributing different relevance levels to the listed guidelines. For the Imagine Peace Project, each festival audit is conducted by a jury that involves the festival organizer, the scientific partners, an “observer” festival organizer as well as a local representative external to the project, to ensure a better consideration of local population and tourism needs.

The audit process begins with an initial meeting to present the festival's scope, objectives, and framework conditions. During this meeting, relevant themes and areas of focus are identified, refined and adjusted in collaboration with the jury members to ensure that all critical aspects of sustainability are considered and balanced appropriately. A preliminary prioritization is established based on the festival's unique aspects and the relevance of each guideline is determined.

The audit itself is conducted with the jury soon after the festival's end, using the tailored guidelines to evaluate the festival's practices and impacts. Information provided by the organizers is reviewed, categorized, and assessed, often with accompanying commentary or recommendations for improvement. It is important to note that the accuracy of the information and assessments provided by the organizers can only be partially verified, which may influence the overall evaluation. Data collected from surveys and local agencies are included to support a more comprehensive evaluation.

This structured and adaptive approach ensures that the sustainability audit is relevant and meaningful, addressing the unique characteristics of each festival while promoting continuous improvement in alignment with sustainability goals.

4.5 Additional Explorative Survey of Visitors, Residents, and Artists

As part of a sustainability audit, an exploratory survey is conducted to gather insights from both visitors and residents, focusing on the sustainability aspects of a festival. Such a survey serves to compare the organizer's self-assessment with external perspectives, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the festival's social, ecological, and organizational impacts.

To reach a diverse audience, the survey can be distributed through a variety of channels, including digital platforms, community outreach, social media, email campaigns, and physical flyers at key locations. This ensures input from both attendees and non-attendees, allowing for a broad range of feedback on different aspects of the festival.

Participants can be categorized based on their relationship to the festival, such as visitors, nearby residents, or those living farther away. For residents who did not attend the festival, the survey can focus on general topics, such as ecological and social impacts, while excluding questions about specific installations or festival details. This approach allows for relevant feedback from all groups.

Only fully completed responses should be used for analysis to ensure reliable data. By integrating these perspectives, the audit can provide a holistic view of the festival's sustainability performance, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement to support more sustainable festival practices in the future.

Surveys will have a common structure used across all festivals to ensure comparability. At the same time, sections with tailored questions about the specific festival as well as a free section that can be adapted to the needs and wishes of the festival organizers will be available as well. All surveys will be available in English and the local language.

Additionally, participating artists will be also asked about their point of view in a tailored survey.

5 Economic Sustainability

Table 1: Evaluation Framework for Economic Sustainability¹

	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	C 1.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Stakeholder Involvement	C 1.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Financial Planning	C 1.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Risk Assessment	C 1.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Employee Wellbeing	C 1.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Workforce Management	C 1.6.	1-4	0-4	
	Knowledge Management	C 1.7.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Management				SUM/80 (%)
Processes	Financial Flows	C 2.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Knowledge Capture	C 2.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Quality Controls	C 2.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Public Relations Strategy	C 2.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Supplier Reliability	C 2.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Dealing with Complaints	C 2.6.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Processes				SUM/68 (%)
Results	Festival Continuity	C 3.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Economic and Tourism Value	C 3.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Sponsoring	C 3.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Perceived Communication	C 3.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Complaints	C 3.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Results				SUM/52 (%)
	Total				SUM/200 (%)

¹ Evaluation Model adapted from *Promberger et al. 2006*.

5.1 Assessment Level: Management

5.1.1 Selection of Installations (C 1.1.)

For each festival, the installations are selected by experts and curators, ensuring a diverse program with high-quality artistic installations. To evaluate the economic sustainability of this process, the following four criteria are applied, for each criterion, one scoring point can be achieved:

- **A. General Quality of the Concept**
This considers the artistic concept, visual appeal, innovation, technical execution, and alignment with the festival's mission. Additionally, the evaluation includes whether the project has a historical or sociocultural context, a meaningful connection to the chosen location, or a clear narrative.
- **B. Technical Feasibility**
The durability and robustness of the installation, ensuring it can withstand the festival's duration, are assessed.
- **C. Artist Reliability**
The reliability of artists is key, not only for meeting expectations but also for safeguarding their professional reputation, which motivates consistent performance. Clear communication and proven track records help ensure dependable partnerships.
- **D. Cost and Financial Feasibility**
The project's cost is evaluated in terms of budget feasibility, including production, transportation, installation, and maintenance expenses. Preference is given to projects that optimize resources and secure funding without compromising artistic and technical quality.

The weighting of these criteria can be adjusted depending on the type of installation, such as light installations versus mapping or video projections. Artists are also required to provide proof of their professionalism, demonstrating that they have already realized installations or completed relevant academic training.

5.1.2 Stakeholder Involvement (C 1.2.)

In addition to the individuals and organizations that are part of the responsible team, various stakeholders² such as local associations, cultural institutions, and municipal authorities can be involved in the organization. This ensures the consideration of multiple perspectives and additional know-how.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No stakeholders involved.
1	Informal engagement (e.g., calls, emails) with fewer than 7 stakeholders
2	Informal engagement (e.g., calls, emails) with at least 7 stakeholders
3	Formal engagement (e.g., formal invitations, structured meetings, input documentation and integration) with fewer than 7 stakeholders
4	Formal engagement (e.g., formal invitations, structured meetings, input documentation and integration) with at least 7 stakeholders.

5.1.3 Financial Planning (C 1.3.)

² Stakeholder is any individual or entity impacted, addressed or otherwise concerned by an intervention. (European Commission, 2015, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?amp=&from=EN&uri=CELEX%3A52015SC0111&utm>)

The primary goal of events like light festivals is not necessarily to generate profits, but maintaining a stable financial situation is crucial for their continued implementation. Proper financial planning, including tax compliance, is essential, ensuring a structured and thorough approach to both budgeting and final accounting. This involves detailed financial plans that outline key aspects such as revenue streams, expenditures, and sponsorship income, presented in a summarized and accessible format. Clear documentation and management of financial flows and income sources are critical for transparency and sustainability. All tax-related issues are addressed contractually in advance to avoid potential complications or liabilities for the organizers.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No financial planning or documentation available.
1	Basic financial planning lacks detail and thoroughness.
2	Detailed financial planning is missing some key elements (e.g., risk assessment or stakeholder involvement).
3	Detailed financial planning, including detailed budgets, stakeholder involvement, and end-of-year financial statements, while lacking some minor elements.
4	Comprehensive financial planning, including all necessary elements such as budgets, stakeholder involvement, end-of-year financial statements and risk assessments.

5.1.4 Risk Assessment (C 1.4.)

Creating a technical risk profile for events, especially in public spaces, involves addressing common risks like proper installation of structures and safe placement of electrical cables. Organizers must ensure these aspects are correctly implemented. Additional risks, such as vandalism and theft, should be mitigated through appropriate measures.

Organizers should identify potential hazards and implement specific measures to address them. Unforeseen incidents can lead to significant financial losses and damage the festival's reputation, highlighting the importance of proactive risk management.

To minimize risks, technical feasibility is assessed during installation selection. Artists conduct on-site visits, and rehearsals and quality checks take place before the festival. Any issues are promptly reported to the festival director. Risk management prioritizes prevention, ensuring the festival can continue even if an installation fails. Multi-day festival structures provide flexibility to address challenges as they arise. Organizers typically arrange liability insurance, but installations are often excluded, making professional liability insurance mandatory for artists. While insurance covers most scenarios, residual risks related to installations should be carefully evaluated.

Points are awarded based on risk management measures. For each of the following measures **1 point** is awarded:

- conducting and documenting a risk assessment,
- evaluating the technical feasibility of installations,
- having liability insurance,
- artists provide professional liability insurance.

5.1.5 Employee Wellbeing (C 1.5.)

Employees are the primary knowledge holders in the organization and execution of an event. Ensuring that this knowledge is preserved is crucial. Long-term retention of employees requires proactive measures to improve working conditions. This includes implementing structured workflows in event organization while also addressing individual needs and preferences. External challenges, such as broader labor market shifts, can exacerbate staff retention issues, underscoring the importance of fostering a supportive and stable work environment.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No retention measures are implemented, leading to potential knowledge loss and instability.
2	Some measures are implemented (e.g., structured workflows) but gaps remain in retention strategies.
4	Comprehensive measures are implemented, ensuring long-term staff retention and knowledge preservation.

5.1.6 Workforce Management (C 1.6.)

Workforce management should be straightforward to ensure fast recruitment and efficient allocation of the figures needed. Strong collaborations with local organizations, which assist in organizing helpers in exchange for financial contributions, can support management efficiency. Additionally, external figures can be contracted.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Workforce management highlights some difficulties, with some festival aspects not being realized due to personnel shortages or inefficient allocation of personnel.
2	Workforce management is overall good, but additional staff or better allocation would enhance the festival or avoid overburdening organizers.
4	Workforce management is successful with no personnel shortages, an effective recruitment system or an efficient allocation of existing staff.

5.1.7 Knowledge Management (C 1.7.)

A knowledge management system is crucial for retaining and making expertise accessible within an organization. Without it, important information often becomes tied to individuals rather than the organization, risking gaps in institutional knowledge when key personnel leave.

An efficient system allows organizations to collect and store insights, processes, and best practices, ensuring expertise remains accessible and supports continuous improvement. It also encourages collaboration and innovation by providing relevant information to all stakeholders, contributing to more efficient operations.

Knowledge management should also consider knowledge exchange with similar organizations. By engaging with other organizers and participating in networks or associations, event planners can share experiences, learn from best practices, and benchmark their efforts. These exchanges offer valuable insights into strategies, challenges, and innovative solutions that enhance festivals' quality and sustainability. They also promote collaboration, with regular contact with other festivals and their organizers ensuring knowledge retention and expansion, benefiting both the festival and its team.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No knowledge management system, important information is unorganized or inaccessible.
1	No formalized knowledge management system but information is accessible to organizers, limited sharing within a small group. No knowledge exchange with similar organizations.
2	No formalized knowledge management system but information is shared with a broader group, insights and processes are not stored. Informal knowledge exchange with similar organizations.
3	Basic knowledge management system, with best practices and processes stored on a shared platform, enabling easier access for stakeholders. The system is not yet fully formalized. Formal knowledge exchange with similar organizations.

4	Comprehensive and formalized knowledge management system, with all organizational knowledge, including processes, insights, and best practices, systematically documented and fully accessible to the entire organization. Systematic knowledge exchange with similar organizations.
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5.2 Assessment Level: Processes

5.2.1 Financial Flows (C 2.1.)

All incoming and outgoing invoices are systematically recorded to ensure complete transparency and prevent untracked financial flows. This oversight minimizes the risk of financial losses. Centralized management of ticket sales provides a clear overview of festival revenues, while other financial streams, such as sponsorship income and expenditures, are also documented. Comprehensive recording helps mitigate significant financial risks and supports effective financial planning. A certain level of financial risk always remains, making it essential to implement measures to mitigate potential losses.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No systematic documentation, untracked financial flows.
1	Documentation of only one financial aspect, e.g. ticket sales.
2	Documentation of 2 financial aspects, e.g. ticket sales and staff payments.
3	Documentation of 3 financial aspects, including sponsorships.
4	Documentation of all financial aspects, including ticket sales, staff and artist payments, sponsorships, and supplier finances.

5.2.2 Knowledge Capture (C 2.2.)

Effective knowledge capture before, during, and after a festival is essential for success. Prior to the festival, organizers review proposals, analyze past performances, and study similar events to gather best practices. During the festival, real-time communication among stakeholders such as artists, curators, and organizers fosters mutual learning and adaptation. After the festival, structured debriefings and feedback collection ensure diverse perspectives are gathered.

A centralized and structured approach to knowledge archival preserves insights for future use. This process often relies on a dedicated project manager or system. Documenting and analyzing mistakes allow organizers to implement changes that reduce the likelihood of recurrence, enhancing the overall quality and efficiency of future festivals. This proactive and constructive approach not only mitigates risks but also fosters innovation and growth.

0 points are given if no systematic knowledge capture takes place. For each of the following measures **1 point** is awarded:

- pre-festival research,
- real-time communication and knowledge exchange during the festival,
- post-festival evaluations, such as surveys or debriefings,
- support by a dedicated manager or a comprehensive centralized system.

5.2.3 Quality Controls (C 2.3.)

Quality controls ensure the success of installations at festivals. These controls typically involve a structured process that separates the content of the installation from its technical execution. Detailed implementation plans are created for each installation, reviewed, and assessed to ensure feasibility and

alignment with the event's goals. Rehearsals and pre-festival checks are conducted to identify and address any technical flaws or unforeseen challenges. These measures ensure that installations meet high standards of quality and are executed as intended.

While technical quality can often be assured through careful planning and testing, there remains a residual risk that the content may not fully align with expectations. This risk can be minimized through careful selection processes, the expertise of curators, and the involvement of experienced professionals. Effective quality controls help ensure that installations contribute positively to the overall experience, with any shortcomings mitigated by the strength of the broader program. This structured approach fosters reliability and enhances the audience's satisfaction.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No quality control measures.
2	Some quality control measures, such as basic planning and pre-festival checks, with limited involvement of professionals or curators.
4	Comprehensive, formalized quality control system, including thorough planning, rehearsals, pre-festival checks, and professional input, ensuring high-quality installations that align with festival goals and mitigate risks.

5.2.4 Public Relations Strategy (C 2.4.)

Public relations for an event require comprehensive planning that considers various communication channels, target audiences, appropriate materials, internal and external resources, financial investments, and the event timeline. Effective event communication plays a critical role in the success of a festival, making professional management and execution essential.

A strong public relations strategy can significantly enhance the visibility and media attention of a festival. One key goal is to increase the proportion of attendees who seek information beforehand, as this helps them better understand the festival's themes and content. Providing more detailed information about individual installations and artists can contribute to achieving this. A well-executed public relations approach ensures that the event not only reaches its intended audience but also leaves a lasting impression.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No planning or communication efforts.
1	Basic planning with focus on one communication channel and target audience.
2	Moderate planning with consideration of multiple communication channels, target audiences, and materials.
3	Comprehensive planning considering most communication channels, target audiences, materials, resources, and festival timeline. Efforts are made to encourage attendees to seek information beforehand.
4	Comprehensive planning considering all aspects of communication channels, target audiences, materials, resources, financial investments, and festival timeline. Strong efforts are made to ensure attendees seek detailed information beforehand.

5.2.5 Supplier Reliability (C 2.5.)

Reliability plays a crucial role in the successful execution of events. Establishing strong relationships and clear agreements with stakeholders fosters trust and minimizes potential disruptions.

Reliable suppliers are particularly important for technical and logistical elements, as delays or failures can significantly impact the festival. Clear communication and proven track records help ensure dependable partnerships.

A well-distributed reliance on multiple suppliers reduces dependency on any single contributor, enhancing the festival's resilience. Fostering reliability across all partners is essential for maintaining quality, managing risks, and delivering a successful festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No established relationships and agreements with stakeholders.
2	Some relationships and agreements with stakeholders, with clear communication and proven track records that help ensure dependable partnerships.
4	Strong relationships and clear agreements with stakeholders, including well-distributed reliance on multiple suppliers.

5.2.6 Dealing with Complaints (C 2.6.)

Effective complaint management is an essential aspect of ensuring visitor satisfaction and maintaining the reputation of an event. Complaints are typically directed to a central point of contact, such as a manager or designated team, to ensure they receive prompt attention. Each complaint is reviewed, assessed, and addressed within a short timeframe, often through the same communication channel used by the complainant.

Feedback from visitors, even when not classified as complaints, is also acknowledged and responded to. This approach demonstrates responsiveness and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Maintaining a systematic approach ensures that any issues raised are resolved effectively, contributing to a positive overall experience and the long-term success of the festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No systematic approach to addressing complaints.
2	Complaints are informally collected and reviewed, with feedback acknowledged and responded to within an undefined time frame
4	Complaints are directed to a central point of contact, reviewed, assessed, and addressed, clear communication, and systematic collection of feedback within a time frame of maximum one week.

5.3 Assessment Level: Results

5.3.1 Festival Continuity (C 3.1.)

To ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of a festival, it is essential to assess and cultivate visitors' willingness to return. A high intention to revisit signals that the festival has a strong future outlook and the capacity to attract and retain attendees, supporting its economic viability.

At the same time, understanding the behavior of loyal or regular visitors by analyzing past editions provides valuable insights into patterns of repeat attendance. This helps identify the factors that foster long-term engagement. Ultimately, the resilience of the festival is closely linked to its ability to consistently draw future audiences.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Less than 50% of people surveyed will probably not visit the festival in the future, at the same time, more than 50% of surveyed people used to visit the festival in the past. This suggests the loss of regular visitors.
2	Less than 50% of people surveyed will probably not visit the festival in the future, at the same time, less than 50% of surveyed people used to visit the festival in the past.

4	Regardless of past editions, more than 50% of people surveyed will likely visit the festival in the future, suggesting the gaining or maintaining of regular visitors.
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5.3.2 Economic and Tourism Value (C 3.2.)

Events like light festivals can serve as strategic tools for promoting a destination and enhancing its visibility. They contribute to strengthening the destination's image and increasing its attractiveness for future travelers. As festivals are usually organized during off-seasons to boost visitor numbers and overnight stays during quieter periods, they can generate a significant positive economic and tourism value for the destination. While these indicators can also be influenced by other factors, such as public holidays, insights from visitors who explicitly traveled to attend the festival can offer more targeted evidence of the event's impact—as well as their perception of the associated economic and tourism value. If these visitors also stayed overnight, this may indicate an even stronger economic benefit for the destination. Visitors' perceptions of economic and tourism value generated by the festival adds one point to the table scores (scale average score ≥ 5), or reduces them by one point (scale average score < 5).

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	The festival represented the main reason for travelling for less than 10% of people surveyed.
1	The festival represented the main reason for travelling for at least 10% of people surveyed. Less than half of these people stayed overnight.
2	The festival represented the main reason for travelling for at least 10% of people surveyed. More than half of these people stayed overnight.
3	The festival represented the main reason for travelling for at least 25% of people surveyed. Less than half of these people stayed overnight.
4	The festival represented the main reason for travelling for at least 25% of people surveyed. More than half of these people stayed overnight.

5.3.3 Sponsoring (C 3.3.)

Sponsorship plays a vital role in supporting the financial sustainability of events. It provides essential funding while creating opportunities to build partnerships with organizations that align with the festival's mission and themes. These collaborations enhance the festival's visibility, strengthen its credibility, and foster mutual benefits for both the sponsors and the organizers. Sponsorship also helps connect the festival to broader networks, contributing to its long-term success and impact.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No sponsorship is secured.
2	At least 2 sponsors are secured, providing moderate funding (below 20%) and partnerships that align with the festival's mission and themes.
4	At least 5 sponsors are secured, providing substantial funding (above 20%) and strong partnerships.

5.3.4 Perceived Communication (C 3.4.)

Media coverage is an essential factor in strengthening the visibility and reputation of a festival. In the context of a sustainability audit, communication effectiveness should be assessed not only through traditional indicators such as media value, reach, or audience size, but also through participant feedback. Besides the satisfaction that participants show with the communication of the organizers before and during the festival, it is also important to look into the importance that this has for the

participants. The resulting matches between satisfaction and relevance can help refine better communication strategies.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Low to very low satisfaction (Likert scale average score ≤ 2) and high relevance (Likert scale average score ≥ 3).
1	Low to very low satisfaction (Likert scale average score ≤ 2) and low relevance (Likert scale average score < 3).
2	Medium satisfaction ($2 < x < 4$) at all relevance levels.
3	High to very high satisfaction (Likert scale average score ≥ 4) and low relevance (Likert scale average score < 3).
4	High to very high satisfaction (Likert scale average score ≥ 4) and high relevance (Likert scale average score ≥ 3).

5.3.5 Complaints (C 3.5.)

The absence of complaints from visitors, such as dissatisfaction with the offerings or perceptions of unjustified pricing, is a positive indicator of success and attendee satisfaction. Regular feedback mechanisms help identify and address potential issues, contributing to continuous improvement and enhanced visitor experiences. As part of a sustainability audit, proactive feedback collection from festival organizers can provide valuable insights into their experiences and perception.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	People perceive that their feedback or complaints are poorly considered (Likert scale average score ≤ 2) OR, more than 95% of surveyed people did not submit any feedback despite overall satisfaction with the festival being low (Likert scale average score ≤ 2).
2	People perceive that their feedback or complaints are partially considered (Likert scale average score $2 < x < 4$) OR, more than 95% of surveyed people did not submit any feedback and overall satisfaction with the festival is medium (Likert scale average score $2 < x < 4$).
4	People perceive that their feedback or complaints are well considered (Likert scale average score ≥ 4) OR, more than 95% of surveyed people did not submit any feedback and overall satisfaction with the festival is high (Likert scale average score ≥ 4).

6 Social Sustainability

Table 2: Evaluation Framework for Social Sustainability

	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	S 1.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Collaboration with Schools and Associations	S 1.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Social Inclusion	S 1.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Family Concept	S 1.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Conflict Management (Residents)	S 1.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Gender Concept	S 1.6.	1-4	0-4	
	Employee Training	S 1.7.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Management				SUM/80 (%)
Processes	Noise Reduction	S 2.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Light Pollution	S 2.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Accessible Communication	S 2.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Safety Measures	S 2.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Active Participation	S 2.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Parking	S 2.6.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Processes				SUM/68 (%)
Results	Light and Noise Disturbance	S 3.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Traffic Disturbance	S 3.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Cross-Generational Inclusiveness	S 3.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Participants with Disabilities	S 3.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Consideration of Local Needs	S 3.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Results				SUM/52 (%)
	Total				SUM/200 (%)

6.1 Assessment Level: Management

6.1.1 Selection of Installations (S 1.1.)

Social aspects are vital to ensure that festivals are **inclusive** for diverse groups and respect **gender equality**. Emphasizing these aspects separately from other criteria like artistic quality, technical feasibility, ecological considerations, and economic factors can ensure they receive the focus they deserve. Highlighting inclusion, participation, and sociocultural context reinforces the importance of social sustainability, creating a more balanced evaluation process.

Involving **local artists** promotes regional talent and strengthens the festival's connection with the community. Providing opportunities for local artists enriches the cultural diversity of the festival and enhances its regional relevance.

At the same time, cultural festivals attract diverse audiences, especially when featuring international artists with different cultural backgrounds. These festivals promote **cultural exchange** and dialogue, fostering broader understanding and shared experiences among participants.

For each of the following social aspects, **1 point** is awarded:

- Presence of inclusive, participative installations,
- achievement of gender balance (at least 60/40),
- involvement of local artists,
- promotion of cultural exchange at European and international level.

6.1.2 Collaborations with Schools and Associations (S 1.2.)

Collaborations with **local organizations, associations, schools, and youth groups** can strengthen community engagement and enhance a festival's impact. These partnerships increase local acceptance and integrate the creative and cultural contributions of various groups more effectively. By involving children and young people beyond school activities and incorporating voluntary involvement, festivals can inspire a deeper connection and foster a sense of ownership and creativity among the younger generation. This approach offers unique opportunities for learning, creativity, and active engagement, benefiting both the festival and the participating individuals.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No collaborations.
2	Collaborations with up to 3 local organizations, associations AND/OR schools, or youth groups.
4	Collaborations with more than 3 local organizations, associations AND schools, or youth groups, involving significant participation and engagement.

6.1.3 Social Inclusion (S 1.3.)

To ensure accessibility and participation for all members of society, it is essential to include diverse age groups, interests, and target audiences. The integration of people with disabilities is a critical aspect of this inclusivity.

For festivals held in public spaces, accessibility is often inherently supported by the infrastructure, reducing the need for additional measures by organizers. However, proactive efforts, such as inclusive communication and tailored initiatives, can further enhance participation. Moreover, the physical accessibility of the festival is just one aspect, other disabilities need to be considered, like hearing or sight impairments. Successful integration projects serve as examples of how large-scale festivals can foster inclusion and provide meaningful opportunities for people with disabilities to engage fully.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
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0	No accessibility measures are considered.
2	Basic accessibility measures, such as infrastructure accessibility and some additional efforts for physical accessibility.
4	Comprehensive accessibility measures to accommodate disabilities (e.g., hearing and sight impairments) and proactive efforts to enhance participation, including inclusive communication and tailored initiatives.

6.1.4 Family Concept (S 1.4.)

Festivals of this nature often attract a significant number of families, making it important to place greater emphasis on family-friendly elements. Offering an engaging program tailored to children and young people can enhance the festival's appeal to families. Additionally, incorporating family-friendliness as a consideration in the selection and design of activities or installations can further support an inclusive and enjoyable experience for all age groups.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No family-friendly measures are implemented.
2	Basic measures are implemented to include some age groups of children.
4	Comprehensive measures are implemented, with all age groups included and special activities, e.g., tours for school groups or kids' festivals.

6.1.5 Conflict Management (Residents) (S 1.5.)

For festivals of extended duration or those held in central locations, such as urban areas, potential conflicts with residents may arise. Implementing a structured conflict and complaint management system ensures responsibilities and procedures are clear within the organizing team. This proactive strategy helps mitigate disputes and handles conflicts efficiently.

Experience from previous editions helps organizers anticipate and address issues. By maintaining clear processes, organizers can foster trust and improve relations with the local community, contributing to the festival's long-term success and acceptance.

A well-organized system allows for a professional and transparent approach, ensuring that critical comments and disputes are addressed promptly. This integrated plan enhances responsiveness and ensures systematic resolution of issues, creating a more harmonious experience for all stakeholders.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No conflict and complaint management system.
1	Basic conflict and complaint management system with unclear responsibilities and basic communication with local citizens.
2	Structured conflict and complaint management system with some clear responsibilities and detailed communication with local citizens before and after the festival.
3	Well-organized conflict and complaint management system with clear responsibilities, proactive strategies, and complaint management with detailed communication with locals.
4	Comprehensive conflict and complaint management system with clear responsibilities, proactive strategies, systematic issue resolution, detailed communication, complaint management, and complimentary tickets to mitigate disturbances.

6.1.6 Gender Concept (S 1.6.)

To ensure cultural festivals are inclusive, implementing a gender concept is crucial. This framework incorporates gender equality principles and inclusive language to promote fairness and representation.

Striving for comprehensive gender neutrality sets a high standard and reflects a commitment to addressing diverse perspectives and needs within the festival's design and communication. Organizers emphasize gender inclusivity in all festival aspects, serving as an exemplary model for other festivals. Achieving a balanced representation of genders among participating artists also falls within these efforts.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No gender concept.
2	Basic gender concept with equality principles and inclusive language, some efforts towards gender neutrality and representation.
4	Comprehensive gender concept with strong implementation of gender equality principles and inclusive language, balanced (at least 60/40) representation of genders among artists, and emphasis on gender inclusivity in all festival aspects.

6.1.7 Employee Training (S 1.7.)

Employees and helpers are prepared for their respective roles to ensure the smooth execution of the festival. Training needs are often most prominent in the organizational aspects of the festival. Knowledge exchange with other festival organizers also forms an integral part of staff development, fostering the sharing of best practices and enhancing overall expertise.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No employee training provided.
2	Basic employee training provided, focusing on organizational aspects.
4	Comprehensive employee training provided, including knowledge exchange with other festival organizers, and sharing of best practices.

6.2 Assessment Level: Processes

6.2.1 Noise Reduction (S 2.1.)

Festival organizers are often aware of potential noise impacts on residents and take measures to address these concerns. Noise levels from installations or festival activities can be adjusted as needed, based on feedback from residents, artists, or technical teams. However, it's important to note that noise doesn't solely originate from installations; visitor activity and overall festival operations can also contribute. While implementing noise reduction measures for attendees may be challenging, open communication initiatives can help raise awareness among visitors and improve acceptance among residents. Small steps in fostering understanding can lead to more harmonious interactions between the festival and the local community.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No noise reduction measures.
1	Basic noise reduction measures, such as adjusting noise levels from installations.
2	Detailed noise reduction measures, including adjustments based on feedback from residents, artists, or technical teams.
3	Detailed noise reduction measures, including adjustments based on feedback and proactive communication initiatives to raise awareness among visitors.

4	Comprehensive noise reduction measures, including adjustments based on feedback, proactive communication to raise awareness among visitors, and efforts to improve acceptance among residents.
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6.2.2 Light Pollution (S 2.2.)

Organizers are aware of light pollution and take measures to ensure that its impact on residents remains within a reasonable level. Applying the precautionary principle is key, with potential effects assessed for each installation.

Expanding communication to inform a broader group of residents about potential light impacts could further enhance these efforts. Regular evaluations and adjustments help address challenges effectively, allowing organizers to improve their approach over time through experience. Moreover, open communication initiatives can help raise awareness among visitors and improve acceptance among residents.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measures to reduce light pollution.
1	Basic measures to reduce light pollution, such as assessing potential effects for each installation.
2	Detailed measures to reduce light pollution, including avoidance of specific light tones.
3	Detailed measures to reduce light pollution, including assessments and communication to inform residents about potential light impacts.
4	Comprehensive measures to reduce light pollution, including assessments, communication, regular evaluations and adjustments, and additional steps to foster understanding of the local community.

6.2.3 Accessible Communication (S 2.3.)

Accessible communication is a key aspect of ensuring inclusivity, extending beyond physical accessibility to encompass language and information delivery. Efforts to implement "plain language" contribute to making festival communication more inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities.

By recognizing their social responsibility, organizers can prioritize the development of comprehensive strategies that promote accessible language across all aspects of the festival. This approach demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and ensures that information is easily understood by diverse audiences, enhancing the overall experience for all participants.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measures for accessible communication
2	Detailed measures for accessible communication, including efforts to use plain language and make information delivery more inclusive for people with disabilities.
4	Comprehensive measures for accessible communication, including the development of strategies that promote accessible language across all aspects of the festival, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity.

6.2.4 Safety Measures (S 2.4.)

Implementing appropriate security measures is essential to ensure the safety of all attendees and maintaining the smooth operation of a festival. The level of required measures often depends on the festival's nature, location, and risk profile.

Drawing on prior experiences and risk assessments allows organizers to identify potential safety concerns and address them effectively during preparations, such as rehearsals and planning meetings. Festivals held in public spaces may benefit from existing infrastructure and oversight, potentially reducing the need for additional measures.

Continuous monitoring and the ability to adapt to unforeseen security risks during the festival are critical components of a robust security strategy, contributing to a safe and enjoyable experience.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No safety measures.
1	No additional safety measures are needed because the existing infrastructure and oversight in public spaces are sufficient.
2	Detailed safety measures, including risk assessments and preparations, but missing some key elements like technical checks or security personnel.
3	Comprehensive safety measures, including technical checks, security personnel, and continuous monitoring, but lacking some minor elements.
4	Comprehensive safety measures, including all necessary elements like technical checks, security personnel, emergency response plans, and proactive strategies.

6.2.5 Active Participation (S 2.5.)

Public participation is a key element for cultural festivals, fostering community engagement and enhancing societal acceptance. Providing opportunities for visitors and residents to actively participate can strengthen the festival's reputation and deepen its connection with people.

Interactive installations or projects open to the entire community are effective ways to encourage participation. These initiatives not only enhance the inclusivity of the festival but also contribute to a more vibrant and engaging atmosphere, enriching the overall festival experience.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No opportunities for public participation.
2	Some opportunities for public participation, such as interactive installations or projects open to the community.
4	Comprehensive opportunities for public participation, including more than 2 interactive installations or projects that actively engage visitors and residents.

6.2.6 Parking (S 2.6.)

Even with efforts to promote sustainable mobility, organizers must anticipate that some attendees will arrive by car. Insufficient parking spaces might cause traffic and additional disturbance to residents. Visitors coming by car should be able to find parking information so that they can reach easily the facility and know how to travel or walk to the festival from it.

Utilizing the existing parking infrastructure aligns with sustainability principles, as it avoids additional environmental impacts on unpaved areas and reduces the need for extra financial and personnel resources to designate and manage parking spaces. Maximizing the use of existing facilities not only minimizes ecological and logistical strain but also reflects an efficient and thoughtful approach to resource management, contributing to the festival's overall sustainability goals.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measures to manage parking
1	New parking solutions to address parking needs.
2	Basic use of existing parking infrastructure with no additional effort from the organizer.

3	Effective use of the existing parking infrastructure, information provided about available parking locations.
4	Effective use of the existing parking infrastructure, efficient approach to resource management, information provided about available parking locations and shuttle buses arranged if parking areas are far away.

6.3 Assessment Level: Results

6.3.1 Light and Noise Disturbance (S 3.1.)

The light and noise impacts on residents are generally within acceptable limits but can vary significantly depending on the location. Each installation may have a different level of impact, requiring tailored assessments and adjustments. Implementing specific measures to mitigate these impacts is essential to minimize disturbances and maintain a balance between the festival and the surrounding community. Moreover, these events can help raise awareness about light and noise pollution in general.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	High to very high additional light and noise pollution compared to normal situation (Likert scale average combined score ≥ 4).
2	Medium additional light and noise pollution compared to normal situation (Likert scale average combined score > 2).
4	Low to very low additional light and noise pollution compared to normal situation (Likert scale average combined score ≤ 2).

6.3.2 Traffic Disturbance (S 3.2.)

Traffic is a key concern for festivals with high visitor inflows. Effective traffic flow management and mitigation measures are essential to minimize disruptions and ensure smooth, sustainable mobility. A well-designed traffic management plan can help address congestion and improve accessibility for both residents and visitors. The perception of increased traffic is a crucial indicator: if residents and visitors feel the festival generates excessive traffic, this suggests a need to strengthen traffic-calming measures. Parking solutions also play a vital role. High satisfaction with parking availability and organization indicates that incoming traffic is being handled effectively, contributing to overall visitor experience and local acceptance.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	High to very high perceived additional traffic (Likert scale average score ≥ 4) and low satisfaction with parking solutions (Likert scale average score < 3).
2	All other combinations.
4	Low to very low perceived additional traffic (Likert scale average score ≤ 2) and high satisfaction with parking solutions (Likert scale average score ≥ 3).

6.3.3 Cross-Generational Inclusiveness (S 3.3.)

Cultural festivals should foster inclusivity across all age groups, with a particular focus on engaging both younger and older generations. Involving youth (up to 25 years old) through educational and creative activities—such as workshops, student contributions, or interactive experiences—enhances the festival’s educational value and strengthens community ties. Special programs for families, especially on

weekends when children are more likely to attend, create a welcoming and enriching atmosphere that encourages intergenerational participation.

Equally important is enabling elderly individuals (65+) to take part both as active contributors and as audience members. This requires a socially inclusive framework that promotes accessibility and well-being. Activities should support physical, mental, and social engagement, while partnerships with care services and community support structures help ensure that older adults can participate comfortably and meaningfully. By designing festival experiences that address the needs and interests of all age groups—from children to seniors—organizers can cultivate a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable cultural environment that brings generations together.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Less than 10% of people surveyed are either younger people or older adults, and no specific initiatives were taken to engage either group.
1	Less than 10% of people surveyed are either younger people or older adults, but some initiatives were taken to engage either group.
2	10-20% of people surveyed are either younger people or older adults.
3	20-30% of people surveyed are either younger people or older adults.
4	More than 30% of people surveyed are either younger people or older adults.

6.3.4 Participants with Disabilities (S 3.4.)

The festival should be designed with inclusiveness in mind, enabling people with disabilities to participate both actively and as attendees. This approach ensures a socially inclusive framework, fostering accessibility and engagement for all individuals involved.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Very poor to poor perceived accessibility of installations and inclusivity of people with disabilities (Likert scale average combined score ≤ 2)
2	Discrete to good perceived accessibility of installations and inclusivity of people with disabilities (Likert scale average combined score < 4)
4	Good to very good perceived accessibility of installations and inclusivity of people with disabilities (Likert scale average combined score ≥ 4)

6.3.5 Consideration of Local Needs (S 3.5.)

The integration of local needs and the potential effects of events on residents are key aspects of sustainable event planning. Events should be designed with sensitivity to the everyday lives of local communities, including an awareness of potential disturbances such as increased visitor activity. Visitors' perceptions of these aspects can help to understand the effects of the festivals on local stakeholders. Low perceived additional disturbance to residents adds one point to the table scores (Likert scale average score ≤ 3), whereas high perceived disturbance to residents reduces the scores by one point (Likert scale average score > 3).

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Low to very low perceived consideration of local interests (Likert scale average score ≤ 2).
2	Medium perceived consideration of local interests (Likert scale average score $2 < x < 4$).
4	High to very high perceived consideration of local interests (Likert scale average score ≥ 4).

7 Ecological Sustainability

Table 3: Evaluation Framework for Ecological Sustainability

	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	E 1.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Environment Management	E 1.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Waste Prevention	E 1.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Energy Saving Plan	E 1.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Cooperation with Environmental Organizations	E 1.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Life Cycle Assessment	E 1.6.	1-4	0-4	
	Environmental Awareness	E 1.7.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Management				SUM/80 (%)
Processes	Energy Saving Measures	E 2.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Wildlife Impact Measures	E 2.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Public Transportation Support Measures	E 2.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Environmentally Sustainable Printing	E 2.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Environmentally Sustainable Resources	E 2.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Technical Quality Controls	E 2.6.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Processes				SUM/68 (%)
Results	Energy Consumption	E 3.1.	1-4	0-4	
	Energy Savings	E 3.2.	1-4	0-4	
	Energy from Renewable Sources	E 3.3.	1-4	0-4	
	Waste Generation	E 3.4.	1-4	0-4	
	Sustainable Transportation	E 3.5.	1-4	0-4	
	Total Results				SUM/52 (%)
	Total				SUM/200 (%)

7.1 Assessment Level: Management

7.1.1 Selection of Installations (E 1.1.)

Incorporating ecological aspects into the selection process for installations is essential to align with sustainability goals and the mission of raising environmental awareness. These aspects can include:

- **Use of Sustainable Materials:** Preference for installations created using recycled, biodegradable, or environmentally friendly materials.
- **Energy Requirements:** Evaluating and minimizing the energy consumption of the installations.
- **Use of Alternative Energy Sources:** Encouraging installations powered by renewable energy.
- **Lifecycle Planning:** Requiring a clear plan for the artwork's future, such as touring, finding new exhibition spaces, or recycling the materials.
- **Sustainable Travel and Transportation:** Considering the environmental impact of the artists' travel and encouraging eco-friendly artwork transportation.
- **Alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Ensuring the installations consider and promote these globally recognized sustainability objectives.

These ecological considerations not only reduce the environmental footprint but also contribute to raising awareness among attendees about sustainability. While artistic quality often takes precedence in the selection process, ensuring that ecological criteria are well-defined and weighted appropriately can help balance creative priorities with environmental goals. By harmonizing the festival's mission with its selection framework, organizers can ensure that ecological sustainability is effectively integrated into every aspect of the festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	None of the 6 aspects is adopted.
1	At least 1 aspect is adopted.
2	2 or 3 aspects are adopted.
3	4 or 5 aspects are adopted.
4	All 6 aspects are adopted.

7.1.2 Environmental Management (E 1.2.)

Implementing an environmental management plan is important for ecological sustainability. Environmental management plans can be enhanced by appointing an environmental officer, who oversees sustainability measures to ensure compliance before, during, and after the festival. They also address aspects like wildlife impact by providing guidelines to artists, consulting environmental organizations, and reviewing installations with agencies. This comprehensive approach shows a commitment to responsible environmental practices.

Documenting and being transparent about these measures strengthen their effectiveness. Residents often show higher sensitivity to environmental issues compared to visitors. Consulting environmental organizations with expertise in local fauna provides valuable guidance and fosters a sustainable festival planning approach.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No environmental management plan or measures.
1	Some general environmental measures, but no formal environmental management plan.
2	Basic environmental management plan, including some documented environmental measures.
3	Detailed environmental management plan, including appointing an environmental officer and addressing wildlife impact.
4	Comprehensive environmental management plan, including appointing an environmental officer, addressing wildlife impact, consulting

	environmental organizations, reviewing installations with agencies, and transparent documentation of measures.
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7.1.3 Waste Prevention (E 1.3.)

A waste prevention plan is an important component of sustainable festival management, aiming to minimize the environmental impact of waste generated during the festival. This includes strategies such as limiting single-use materials, promoting reusable resources, and carefully managing the distribution of materials like printed items to avoid overproduction.

When the festival's structure inherently generates minimal waste, like where food and beverages are not served, existing municipal waste management systems may suffice. However, integrating principles of waste prevention, such as using recyclable materials and encouraging attendees to dispose of waste responsibly, ensures a more sustainable approach.

Even when waste is not a significant issue for a festival, adopting and implementing a waste prevention plan reflects a proactive commitment to sustainability.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No waste prevention plan or measures.
1	Some waste prevention measures, such as limiting single-use materials and promoting reusable resources.
2	Basic waste prevention plan, including strategies like limiting single-use materials, promoting reusable resources, and managing the distribution of printed items to avoid overproduction.
3	Detailed waste prevention plan, including using recyclable materials, implementing a waste separation plan.
4	Comprehensive waste prevention plan, including all the aforementioned measures, proactive communication of waste reduction efforts, and encouraging responsible waste disposal by attendees.

7.1.4 Energy-Saving Plan (E 1.4.)

An energy-saving concept contributes to minimizing the environmental impact of a festival. It prioritizes energy efficiency, reduction, and in some cases, compensation to offset energy consumption. Energy efficiency focuses on optimizing the use of resources, while reduction is tied to decisions such as the scale and design of installations. Avoidance measures often require balancing ecological goals with economic considerations.

Compensation, such as offsetting consumed energy, represents an ambitious approach to achieving energy neutrality, although it is still relatively uncommon in many festivals. By implementing an energy-saving plan, organizers can address key sustainability challenges and demonstrate commitment to reducing the ecological footprint of the festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No energy-saving measures.
1	Some energy-saving measures focused on optimizing the use of resources.
2	Basic energy-saving plan, including energy efficiency and reduction measures tied to the scale and design of installations.
3	Detailed energy-saving plan, including energy efficiency and reduction measures, avoidance strategies that balance ecological goals with economic considerations, and the use of renewable energy sources.
4	Comprehensive energy-saving plan, including all the aforementioned measures, extensive use of renewable energy sources, and compensation strategies to offset consumed energy, demonstrating a commitment to achieving energy neutrality.

7.1.5 Cooperation with Environmental Organizations (E 1.5.)

Environmental organizations play an important advisory role in ensuring the ecological sustainability of festivals. Their involvement provides valuable insights and recommendations to minimize environmental impact. By consulting these organizations, organizers can identify potential challenges, refine their plans, and incorporate sustainability principles effectively.

Although such organizations may not have formal decision-making authority, their expertise helps address critical environmental considerations and ensures compliance with broader sustainability goals.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No consultation with environmental organizations.
2	Consultation with environmental organizations and partial inclusion of their recommendations.
4	Active consultation of environmental organizations, with their recommendations fully incorporated, and their expertise leveraged to address environmental considerations and ensure compliance with sustainability goals.

7.1.6 Life Cycle Assessment (E 1.6.)

A life cycle assessment (LCA) serves as a valuable tool for identifying and analyzing the environmental impacts of festivals, products, or services. However, conducting a comprehensive LCA can be challenging due to the lack of complete data, such as visitor travel patterns, additional traffic, or waste generation, which can be difficult to quantify accurately for large festivals.

Despite these challenges, even partial assessments focusing on measurable factors, such as energy consumption or material usage, can provide meaningful insights. Such efforts support continuous improvement and the development of strategies to minimize negative outcomes, making LCA an important consideration for sustainable festival management.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No LCA is conducted.
2	Partial LCA is conducted, focusing on measurable factors such as energy consumption or material usage.
4	Full LCA is conducted, addressing as many factors as possible despite data limitations, and using the insights to develop strategies to minimize negative outcomes.

7.1.7 Environmental Awareness (E 1.7.)

Raising awareness about environmental issues should be central to festival communication, driving sustainable thinking and discussions. Highlighting topics such as biodiversity loss, light pollution, and energy consumption can spark meaningful dialogue and a broader understanding of sustainability. Artistic installations play a crucial role in this process, using creativity to embed environmental consciousness in attendees' minds. Partnering with businesses and artists can amplify this message, ensuring sustainability becomes a key theme and takeaway.

While some installations focus on visual impact, others might emphasize environmental themes, sometimes leading to a tension between the medium and the message. This intentional contrast can provoke thought and inspire dialogue, fostering deeper engagement with sustainability issues. Ultimately, leveraging art to evoke emotions and stimulate discussions about ecological challenges contributes to a broader cultural shift toward sustainability.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No efforts to raise environmental awareness.

1	Minimal efforts to raise environmental awareness, such as highlighting a few environmental topics.
2	Moderate efforts to raise environmental awareness, including highlighting multiple environmental topics and partnering with a few businesses or artists.
3	Significant efforts to raise environmental awareness, including highlighting multiple environmental topics, partnering with businesses or artists, and using artistic installations to embed environmental consciousness.
4	Exceptional efforts to raise environmental awareness, including highlighting multiple environmental topics, partnering with numerous businesses and artists, using artistic installations to provoke thought, and leveraging art to stimulate discussions about ecological challenges.

7.2 Assessment Level: Processes

7.2.1 Energy-Saving Measures (E 2.1.)

Implementing energy-saving measures is an important aspect of sustainable festival management. This can include optimizing the energy efficiency of installations, using renewable energy sources, and encouraging stakeholders, such as local businesses, to adopt energy-saving practices. However, balancing sustainability with the festival's growth can be challenging. An increase in installations or features may elevate the festival's appeal but could also lead to higher energy demands. By focusing on innovative energy-efficient solutions, organizers can minimize the environmental impact while maintaining the quality and scale of the festival.

For each of the following aspects **1 point** is awarded:

- the energy efficiency of installations is optimized,
- compensation measures such as turning off other public lighting,
- stakeholders are encouraged to adopt energy-saving practices,
- innovative energy-efficient solutions are implemented to balance sustainability with the festival's growth.

7.2.2 Wildlife Impact Measures (E 2.2.)

Minimizing the impact on wildlife should be primarily addressed during the planning stages of the festival. This includes setting clear selection criteria and guidelines for artists to ensure environmentally sensitive practices. Particular attention is given to elements that could affect local ecosystems, such as the use of blue light, which can disrupt various organisms.

By focusing on anticipation and careful planning, organizers aim to reduce wildlife disturbance to a minimum. This involves thorough planning, specific instructions for installations, and consultation with environmental organizations. While some level of impact on wildlife may be unavoidable, these proactive measures are designed to mitigate it.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measures to minimize the impact on wildlife.
2	Basic wildlife impact measures, including setting clear selection criteria and guidelines for artists to ensure environmentally sensitive practices, such as avoiding the use of blue light.
4	Comprehensive wildlife impact measures, including thorough planning, specific instructions for installations, consultation with environmental

	organizations, and addressing elements that could affect local ecosystems.
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7.2.3 Public Transportation Support Measures (E 2.3.)

The organizer acknowledges the ecological impact of travel associated with the festival and takes steps to promote sustainable mobility. This includes enhancing public transportation options and encouraging its use. Expanding these efforts further can contribute significantly to reducing the environmental footprint of the festival while improving accessibility for attendees.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measures to promote public transportation.
2	Basic public transportation support measures, such as enhancing public transportation options (e.g., increasing bus or train services) or encouraging their use through promotional campaigns or discounted tickets.
4	Comprehensive public transportation support measures, including expanding public transportation options, actively promoting their use through partnerships with local transit authorities, implementing additional measures such as shuttle services from key locations, providing bike-sharing programs, and improving pedestrian pathways to the festival.

7.2.4 Environmentally Sustainable Printing (E 2.4.)

Efforts to minimize printed materials are an important aspect of environmentally conscious public relations. When print products are necessary, using recycled paper, free from optical brighteners or chlorine bleach, aligns with sustainable practices. Additionally, making materials available online ensures broader access while reducing environmental impact.

By prioritizing eco-friendly printing and, even more, digital alternatives, organizers adhere to sustainability standards and emphasize their commitment to reducing waste and conserving resources. Continuing to focus on minimizing printed promotional materials reinforces these efforts.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measures to reduce printed materials.
2	Basic measures, such as using recycled paper free from optical brighteners or chlorine bleach. Some materials are available online.
4	Comprehensive measures and digital communication strategy, including prioritizing eco-friendly printing practices, making materials available online, and actively reducing the use of printed promotional materials.

7.2.5 Environmentally Sustainable Resources (E 2.5.)

The careful selection and use of resources play a crucial role in minimizing environmental impact. Emphasis should be placed on reusability, ensuring that materials, artworks, and technical equipment can be repurposed for future festivals or other applications. By transporting materials in their original packaging and sourcing smaller items locally, unnecessary waste and long transport routes are avoided. A commitment to principles of circular economy, such as reducing waste and prioritizing resource efficiency, underscores the sustainable approach. Decorative elements are kept to a minimum, further conserving resources.

For each of the following aspects **1 point** is awarded:

- emphasizing **reusability** of materials, artworks, and technical equipment,
- **transporting** materials in a way that avoids unnecessary waste and long transport routes,
- committing to principles of **circular economy**,
- keeping **decorative elements** to a minimum.

7.2.6 Technical Quality Controls (E 2.6.)

Technical quality checks, conducted by the technical team and artists, ensure that equipment is used efficiently and environmentally responsibly. This helps prevent unnecessary resource consumption caused by malfunctioning devices. These quality controls optimize the ecological footprint of the festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No technical quality controls.
2	Basic technical quality controls to ensure equipment is used efficiently.
4	Comprehensive technical quality controls, including thorough technical quality checks by both the technical team and artists to prevent unnecessary resource consumption.

7.3 Assessment Level: Results

7.3.1 Energy Consumption (E 3.1.)

Managing energy consumption is a key focus for organizers aiming to enhance the sustainability of a festival. Striving for energy neutrality provides a clear directive for reducing the overall environmental impact. While net energy consumption is an important indicator, gross consumption should also be monitored and reduced over time to ensure broader sustainability goals are achieved. Effective energy management contributes significantly to the ecological optimization of the festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No measurement of energy consumption.
1	Total energy consumption exceeds 20 kW/installation.
2	Total energy consumption is between 12-20 kW/installation.
3	Total energy consumption is between 3-12 kW/installation.
4	Total energy consumption is below 3 kW/installation.

7.3.2 Energy Savings (E 3.2.)

In addition to measuring energy consumption, it is essential to consider how the audience perceives the energy efficiency of the installations. Audience feedback can provide valuable insights into the perceived sustainability and environmental impact of the festival, influencing future decisions and improvements.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	High to very high perceived additional energy consumption (Likert scale average score ≥ 4) and low to very low perceived ecological sustainability of light installations (Likert scale average score ≤ 2).
2	All other combinations

4	Low to very low perceived additional energy consumption (Likert scale average score ≤ 2) and high to very high perceived ecological sustainability of light installations (Likert scale average score ≥ 4).
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7.3.3 Energy from Renewable Sources³ (E 3.3.)

In addition to overall energy consumption, the source of electricity also plays an important role. Prioritizing 100% renewable energy sends a strong message about the commitment to sustainability and reduces the environmental impact of the festival.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	No energy from renewable sources.
1	Up to 25% of the festival's energy comes from renewable sources.
2	25-50% of the festival's energy comes from renewable sources.
3	50-75% of the festival's energy comes from renewable sources.
4	75-100% of the festival's energy comes from renewable sources.

7.3.4 Waste Generation (E 3.4.)

Effective waste management is a critical component of sustainable festival planning. By implementing measures to minimize waste and prioritize the reuse of resources and materials, festivals can significantly reduce their environmental impact and ensure that the city cleanliness remains unchanged.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	High to very high perceived additional waste generation and negative effects on city cleanliness (Likert scale average combined score ≥ 4).
2	Medium perceived additional waste generation and negative effects on city cleanliness (Likert scale average combined score >2).
4	Low to very low perceived additional waste generation and negative effects on city cleanliness (Likert scale average combined score ≤ 2).

7.3.5 Sustainable Transportation (E 3.5.)

Encouraging attendees to use public transportation, walk or cycle is a key factor in reducing the festival's overall carbon footprint. While precise data may not always be available, festivals held in easily accessible locations are more likely to attract a higher proportion of participants using sustainable transport options compared to other festivals. Offering incentives and promoting public transport, walking or cycling options can further increase this share, aligning with the festival's sustainability goals. High satisfaction with public transport (Likert scale average score ≥ 3) adds one point to the table scores, low satisfaction (Likert scale average score <3) reduces scores by one point.

Scoring Points Awarded	Achievement Level
0	Less than 20% of people surveyed, artists, and staff used public transport, walked or cycled to reach the festival.
1	20-40% of people surveyed, artists, and staff used public transport, walked or cycled to reach the festival.
2	40-60% of people surveyed, artists, and staff used public transport, walked or cycled to reach the festival.
3	60-80% of people surveyed, artists, and staff used public transport, walked or cycled to reach the festival.

³ Renewable energy sources, also called renewables, are energy sources that replenish (or renew) themselves naturally. Typical examples are solar energy, wind and biomass ([Eurostat, 2025](#)).

4	More than 80% of people surveyed and artists used public transport, walked or cycled to reach the festival.
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8 Conclusion

A sustainability audit serves as a comprehensive tool to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a festival in terms of its sustainability performance. It allows organizers to systematically identify areas for improvement and highlight practices that align with ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

Such audits focus on multiple dimensions, including management practices, operational processes, and measurable outcomes. By separating these aspects into sustainability pillars—environment, social equity, and economy—the audit provides a structured framework for assessing the festival's overall impact. However, the interconnected nature of these pillars often reveals challenges in isolating specific issues, highlighting the complexity of operationalizing sustainability in practice.

A well-executed audit not only ensures the identification of negative effects but also supports the development of actionable strategies to minimize environmental and social impacts. It can foster innovation, such as energy-efficient technologies, inclusive initiatives, and efforts to engage local communities. The process can also strengthen public and media perception, enhancing the festival's reputation and creating positive effects across various stakeholders.

Ultimately, sustainability audits are a critical step in aligning festivals with broader ecological and social goals, offering valuable insights and establishing a benchmark for continuous improvement. By integrating this holistic approach, organizers can achieve a balance between the needs of attendees, local communities, and environmental stewardship.

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