

# Environmental sustainability Guide

FOR ENTERPRISING  
MUSICIANS



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# 1. Introduction

Climate change is already a reality. For example, the temperature recorded on 7 July 2023, while the average temperature on the planet reached 17.25°C, the highest ever recorded. Furthermore, despite the supposed objective of limiting the rise in temperatures to 1.5°C, established in the Kyoto Protocol (COP3, 1997) and ratified, and even extended, in the Paris Agreement (COP21, 2015), the use of fossil fuels, the main source of greenhouse gases, is likely to increase the average temperature of the Earth by around 3°C. This is the opinion of two thirds of the scientists on the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The consequences of such a temperature rise are closely linked to rising sea levels, more frequent extreme heat waves, the likelihood of severe droughts and the risk of heavy flooding. All of these are already a reality on a planet thirsting for solutions on a large and small scale. In this sense, every action counts.

The Reina Sofía Music School, located in the city of Madrid, has decided to address the problem as part of its needs. The School responds as expected of a centre of exceptional educational quality that offers a comprehensive and personalised education to an exquisite group of young classical music talents. As part of its education, the School offers more than 300 concerts a year, including symphonic and chamber music projects, as well as a wide range of recitals. In this sense, it is both an educational centre and a cultural dynamo in the heart of the Spanish capital. After their time at the School, many of the musicians who have graduated from it have gone on to become leading international musicians. Figures such as Arcadi Volodos, Sol Gabetta, Aquiles Machado, Pablo Ferrández or groups such as the Casals Quartet or the Quiroga Quartet are examples of the extraordinary level achieved by former students at music school committed to the highest standards.

The Reina Sofía Music School is strongly committed to the Sustainable Development Goals from an educational, social and environmental point of view. As an institution of relevance in the cultural and musical sphere, the School is an active player in the fight against climate change and in caring for the environment. It is also a promoter of a paradigm shift in the status of the classical musician, who, traditionally, was limited to achieving excellence in performance without being required to hold a relevant position in the society in which he or she was immersed. Against an image of the musician as a passive subject of his time, the School, aware of the challenges he faces in a changing world with high rates of precariousness, created the *Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation Programme* in the 2016-2017 academic year. This led to the creation of the subject for the School's Master's Degree in music performance, which currently enjoys the collaboration of the Fundación Banco Sabadell and IF International Foundation.

The School's concern to prepare students for the artistic panorama in which they will develop their professional careers is most evident in the projects developed by the students themselves within the framework of the *Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation* subject. With the support and motivation of the School, different initiatives have been carried out, some of them in tune with society's commitment to the environment. Thus, projects such as "The Sound of Recycling", "Dryad Project", "Listen to the Earth" or "Nearby Music" propose musical experiences that respect nature, aware of the role that artists play in the society that surrounds them. The musician, in this sense, can and must have their own criteria when it comes to accepting or developing a project and do so in a sustainable way.

As part of the dynamism expected of musicians in the 21st century, we propose below a guide with tips for environmentally friendly artistic projects. In doing so, we hope to fulfil two main objectives: on the one hand, we offer a series of steps to be followed by enterprising musicians with an environmental conscience; on the other hand, we consider that these guidelines point to basic issues for the music industry and that, if followed unanimously, they will achieve the goal of reducing the carbon footprint that we all wish to see. Musicians can play an important role in the fight against climate change. We hope that this guide will help them to be the example that every artist should be.



## 2. Relationship with the sustainable development goals

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were proposed, in which strategies are developed that focus on how to live today to achieve a better future. The three main pillars on which the SDGs are based are economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. As all areas of action are interrelated, it is assumed that sustainable economic growth can only occur in egalitarian societies with policies that combat environmental degradation. Sustainability is therefore understood in a broad sense.

The guide we offer here will refer to the SDGs that focus on care for the environment, i.e., the Goals set for a use of natural resources that avoids environmental pollution and does not result in permanent losses to the environment. These are objectives that may seem overwhelming; however, although the responsibility of governments and large multinationals is urgent, we should not underestimate the collective capacity that arises from small, everyday actions. For the former, the UN has proposed the incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into the national plans of member countries<sup>1</sup>. In terms of individual, albeit always collective, efforts in pursuit of environmental sustainability, the organisation encourages the search for daily actions that can be taken daily. To this end, it offers the Act Now Challenge, a mobile application that includes spaces such as a Carbon Footprint calculator, a cost meter (both economic and environmental impact), suggestions for feasible actions and, most inspiring of all, the possibility of creating

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1. In the case of Spain, this involved the creation of the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, a body largely dedicated to the implementation of the SDGs.



communities and creating environmental sustainability teams with other users. In this way, communication between individuals is encouraged, so that they no longer feel alone in the face of the environmental challenge facing us.

Without losing sight of the fact that each action proposed in the SDGs is interrelated with the others, we consider that several of them should be taken into account by enterprising musicians:



Water is an essential resource for human life, but it is not unlimited. It is everyone's responsibility to use water resources responsibly.



As far as possible, we should use clean or energy-efficient energy sources.



Although the major changes are structural, the possibility of using public transport or travelling by sustainable means is an option to reduce the pollution suffered in many large population centres.



Use more and better with fewer resources. Reduce consumption, reuse, repair and recycle. These are the maxims that guide the responsible musician.



Small actions and individual decisions are fundamental tools to curb global warming. Every gesture counts.



Marine biodiversity is everyone's responsibility. Using plastic products responsibly, especially plastic bags, is one of the small decisions that can help in this cause.



Respect for biodiversity is fundamental and must be at the heart of our decisions as responsible entrepreneurial musicians.



### 3. Environmental sustainability guide for enterprising musicians

**M**usic, in its broadest sense, is a meeting between people who connect without words. Musicians have the power to move, to make their audiences feel, to sublimate. Moreover, in their concert activity, musicians have the opportunity to do their bit for sustainability in two main ways: on the one hand, the stage offers them a privileged position which, wisely used, can serve as an inspiration and example; on the other hand, the enterprising musician has the ability to choose to adopt a series of environmentally sustainable habits, thus efficiently limiting his or her carbon footprint. Furthermore, by adopting environmentally friendly ways of working, they will be able to offer attractive, interesting, and contemporary musical experiences.

As we mentioned in relation to the SDGs, the concept of “sustainability”, although defined in the Dictionary of the Royal Academy as “Especially in ecology and economics, which can be maintained for a long time without exhausting resources or causing serious damage to the environment” (DRAE), in the popular imagination refers to aspects mentioned above, such as the defence of human rights or the struggle to achieve an egalitarian economy. However, even though these aspects are undoubtedly interrelated, in the action guide that we now present, reference will be made to those areas of action that will allow the enterprising musician to build tours, concerts or musical projects of any kind that are respectful of the environment. The aim, therefore, will be to significantly reduce the environmental impact of their companies.



The Environmental Sustainability Guide for Enterprising Musicians focuses on 7 specific areas, including examples and proposals for carrying out a sustainable music project. The tasks proposed are the following:



TRAVELLING



ACCOMMODATION



FOOD AND BEVERAGES



ACQUISITION OF  
TANGIBLE GOODS



HUMAN RESOURCES



WASTE MANAGEMENT



COMMUNICATION AND  
MOTIVATION CAMPAIGNS



Here is a practical guide with useful advice for enterprising musicians. Far from catastrophism, we believe that every step is important: take the plunge to limit your carbon footprint and reduce your environmental impact!



## 3.1 TRAVELLING:

### 3.1.1 Mobility:

**3.1.1.1 Hierarchy of transport choice:** sometimes the group or soloist must use extremely polluting means of transport to reach distant destinations. However, there are times when we can choose how to get to our destination. The hierarchy of transport choice, where we have a choice, is as follows:

- a.) Train
- b.) Electric public transport
- c.) Fossil-fuelled bus / public transport\*
- d.) Bus or private transport
- e.) Hybrid or electric private vehicle
- f.) Carpooling
- g.) Private vehicle
- h.) Ship
- i.) Aircraft

We are aware that this is a very basic list and that there are intermediate solutions. For example, in towns poorly connected to the rail network, it may be more viable to rent a hybrid vehicle. Despite this, and assuming a likely carbon footprint, we aim for sensible travel planning that reduces pollution as much as possible.

We recommend keeping a maxim when we have several options before us: if journeys take no more than 8 hours by train, the train will be chosen over the plane.

**3.1.1.2 Linear routes:** when planning a tour, avoid zigzag routes. The enterprising musician should, when planning a tour, take a map and trace the line of travel. While you are likely to encounter reluctance, negotiating with the other side and defending your sustainability perspective is a must. Not only will you drastically reduce pollution levels, but you will also save money by travelling closer together. It's a win-win for the forward-thinking musician.

**3.1.1.3 Accessibility:** when choosing a location for the musical event, we can opt for a place that is easily accessible. Based on this assumption, an optimal venue in terms of environmental sustainability would therefore be a venue located in the centre of a large city. Here, it would be accessible by different forms of public transport (metro, bus, train...) and even on foot or by bicycle. However, such a decision raises a question that should not be overlooked by the enterprising musician: by following this principle to the letter, would we not be depriving rural environments, peripheral urban areas, or marginal neighbourhoods of cultural offerings? Precisely those environments where access to culture is already limited. A situation therefore arises that must be resolved in sustainable terms.

### 3.1.2 Location:

**3.1.2.1 Respecting and caring for natural spaces:** locations in the heart of nature or near rural areas are a good option, as they allow artistic proposals to be brought closer to environments that are not often reached, and through which these environments can be enhanced. It is the responsibility of the musician to care for and protect these spaces so that they do not become invasive proposals. They must try to respect the environment, adapting themselves to the space and not the other way round.

**3.1.2.2 Look for “green” locations:** spaces that manage waste well When choosing a premises or a space in which to develop your project, pay attention to aspects such as electricity consumption or whether it uses renewable energies (e.g. whether it has solar panels).



## 3.2 ACCOMMODATION:

### 3.2.1 Make your own hotel experience more sustainable:

While more and more tourist accommodations have sustainable policies, the truth is that the consumer can help through simple choices:

**3.2.1.1** Asking not to wash your sheets or towels.

**3.2.1.2** Carrying your own soap/gel.

**3.2.1.3** Taking a shower rather than a bath

**3.2.1.4** Practising energy efficiency by turning off lights and devices when you don't need them.

**3.2.1.5** Leaving an informative review highlighting the accommodation's sustainable practices. This encourages other travellers to choose more environmentally friendly options.

The responsibility should not be left to others. Together, we can make the travel experience more sustainable.

### 3.2.2 Look for “eco-friendly” accommodation:

Hotels with an efficient or sustainable use of resources. Ask about accommodations, opting for those with official certifications such as LEED or Green Key certification, which indicate their commitment to sustainability. You can also find out if the accommodation has recycling and waste reduction policies. By choosing accommodation that promotes these practices, you are helping to reduce waste generation and resource use.

### 3.2.3 Sharing economy:

The sharing economy in accommodation offers the opportunity to be more sustainable by renting local properties such as houses, flats, or rooms, which benefits both travellers and host communities. Computer applications connect local hosts with people looking for temporary accommodation, providing an alternative to traditional hotels. In this guide we recommend using apps that enable sustainable tourism.

### 3.2.4 Stay in venues close to the event venue.

This will reduce our carbon footprint and save money by avoiding unnecessary transport.





## 3.3 FOOD AND BEVERAGES:

### 3.3.1 Avoid food waste by planning meals in advance

This requires the commitment of the whole group. Simply by indicating who eats, who doesn't and how much, you can avoid throwing away a lot of the food that ends up in the rubbish and, if well managed, you can make significant financial savings. Did you know that around a third of the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted worldwide, which is equivalent to approximately 1.3 billion tonnes per year? Here are some suggestions:

- 3.1.1.1 Flexible menus:** Offer smaller portion size options for those who do not want large portions. Also consider tasting menus to reduce waste.
- 3.1.1.2 Allow leftovers to be taken away:** Encourage diners to take leftovers away in containers to prevent them from being thrown away.
- 3.1.1.3 Education on the menu:** Include messages on the menu that inform diners about your efforts to reduce food waste and encourage them to do the same.
- 3.1.1.4 Food donations:** If you have food that cannot be re-served, consider donating it to local charities rather than throwing it away.
- 3.1.1.5 Discounts or incentives:** Offer discounts or incentives to diners who bring their own reusable containers or choose smaller portion size options.

### 3.3.2 Managing food and drink leftovers.

A good option to avoid waste is to use apps that allow you to manage food waste in good condition by connecting people and places nearby (OLIO, To Good to Go...)<sup>2</sup>. You can also consider donating them to local charities instead of throwing them away.

### 3.3.3 Buy local, seasonal, and organic food.

Consuming these foods allows us to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing or eliminating the means of transport used to transport processed products over long distances<sup>3</sup>. In addition, it favours the local economy, is beneficial for our health and is often tastier, as it preserves its properties intact.

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2. <https://www.grupodigital.eu/blog/apps-desperdicio-de-alimentos/>

3. <https://blog.cerdanyaecoresort.com/productos-km-0-que-son/>

### 3.3.4 Reducing meat consumption.

The unlimited consumption of meat (mainly beef) has led to deforestation, loss of biodiversity and increased greenhouse gas emissions<sup>4</sup>. Adding fresh, plant-based foods will help us to mitigate these effects on the environment and help us to have a healthier and more balanced diet.



## 3.4 ACQUISITION OF TANGIBLE GOODS:

Part of the environmental commitment we propose here involves offshoring. In this way, renting from local suppliers helps to reduce the carbon footprint by travelling with less material. Similarly, by interlinking all the factors involved in sustainability, it encourages local consumption and the economy of local producers. By renting rather than buying, demand for raw materials is reduced, which can help reduce pressure on natural ecosystems and biodiversity.

Material goods that can be offshored include the following:

### 3.4.1 Instruments:

An alternative to travelling with large instruments is to rent them at the venue.

### 3.4.2 Lighting and sound equipment:

You can decide to install lights or not, always considering the possibilities offered by natural light. If you decide to install lighting, opt for LED or energy-saving lights. You can also decide to rent your sound equipment and save all the travel arrangements.

### 3.4.3 Sets, scenery, furniture, and props:

Far from being a drawback, renting sets from local suppliers can be an opportunity to create something different, directly linked to the identity of each place where you perform.

### 3.4.4 Costumes:

As with sets, on-site rental is an option that should not be overlooked, especially if it is an alternative to making new elements, it is always better to make use of elements already created through rental, as it reduces the demand for natural resources, minimises waste and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

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4. [https://www.nationalgeographic.com.es/mundo-ng/impacto-ambiental-carne-es-innegable\\_17128](https://www.nationalgeographic.com.es/mundo-ng/impacto-ambiental-carne-es-innegable_17128)



## 3.5 HUMAN RESOURCES:

### 3.5.1 Avoid unnecessary displacements:

Assess which people are essential to carry out the event or the project you have underway.

### 3.5.2 Relocating responsibilities:

Closely related to the previous point, the enterprising musician must make an effective assessment of all the essential elements for a quality event. This raises the question: are there positions that can be filled with staff from the event venue? Offshoring responsibilities reduces our carbon footprint and encourages a local workforce. As mentioned before, the interrelation of sustainability factors allows us to positively influence other areas, such as equality and sustainable economy.

### 3.5.3 Sustainability training:

Provides training on sustainability so that staff understand how they can contribute to the project's objectives in this area.







## 3.6 WASTE MANAGEMENT:

For proper waste management, we consider the Three Rs Rule: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (Greenpeace). Based on this principle, we propose waste reduction in the following areas:

### 3.6.1 Water:

Eliminate the use of plastic bottles. Wherever possible and safe, drink tap water. Unfortunately, this does not occur frequently in many parts of the world. Use this resource whenever possible and reflect on access to a resource that is indispensable for human life.

### 3.6.2 Making good use of electricity.

Our search for a good location should consider whether it has a renewable energy electricity system and whether it makes efficient use of heating or air conditioning.

### 3.6.3 Do not use disposable products:

Amaxim ranging from excessive packaging on certain foods to the use of promotional materials for the event. Instrument cases should be taken care of so that they have a long life. Tablets are also a good option for sheet music, although you can also bind existing sheet music to make it last longer. In projects where food and beverages are offered, eliminate the use of disposable objects altogether and opt for reusable solutions.

### 3.6.4 Clothing:

Buy good quality clothes that will last over time or buy second-hand clothes. Avoiding the phenomenon known as *fast fashion*<sup>5</sup> is encouraged. Some criteria to consider:

#### 3.6.4.1 Sustainable materials:

Sustainable clothing should be made of materials that are environmentally friendly. This includes the use of organic fibres, such as organic cotton, hemp, and linen, as well as recycled or regenerative materials. Synthetic materials derived from petroleum, such as polyester and nylon, which generate a lot of waste and have a negative environmental impact, should also be avoided.

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5. <https://www.greenpeace.org/mexico/blog/9514/fast-fashion/>

#### 3.6.4.2 Transparency and traceability:

Sustainable clothing brands must be transparent about their production processes and supply chains. This includes providing information about the sourcing of materials and the working conditions of workers at all stages of the production chain.

#### 3.6.4.3 Durability and quality:

Sustainable clothing must be designed and built to last. This implies the choice of durable materials and high-quality tailoring techniques that prevent premature wear and tear.

#### 3.6.4.4 Alternatives to fast fashion:

Sustainable clothing opposes the “fast fashion” model, which promotes mass production and over-consumption of clothing. Instead, it focuses on creating high-quality, timeless garments that do not go out of fashion quickly.

#### 3.6.4.5 Labelling and certifications:

Sustainable clothing brands often seek certifications and seals to back up their sustainability claims, such as GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) for organic textiles or Fair Trade for fair labour conditions.





## 3.7 COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION CAMPAIGNS:

### 3.7.1 Encourage sustainable transport among the public:

As we have been insisting since the beginning of this guide, the enterprising musician should not be limited to that sacralised image of the individualistic genius. The musician is part of society and has the capacity to interact with it. And of course, with the people who attend their concerts: how can he/she pass up the opportunity to contact them with sustainable suggestions? It could be information about the public transport network, encouraging them to go for a walk, putting them in touch with you to share private means of transport... Every step counts.

### 3.7.2 Promote waste reduction and recycling among the public:

Either by example or with explicit messages. Some ideas:

**3.7.2.1 Place clearly labelled recycling bins** for paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, and aluminium in strategic areas of the concert venue, such as near food and drink stalls, toilets and rest areas. Ensure that the bins are visible and accessible.

**3.7.2.2 Recruit dedicated recycling support staff** who can provide information and help attendees to sort and dispose of their waste properly. Green volunteering?

**3.7.2.3 Engage social media** by promoting the use of sustainability and recycling related hashtags on social media, and encourage attendees to share their recycling and environmental awareness efforts online.

### 3.7.3 Transform the music event experience:

Take advantage of the challenge of environmental sustainability to be creative and offer a different experience while maintaining artistic quality. This can be achieved in several ways: holding outdoor concerts to take advantage of natural light, encouraging the audience to measure their carbon footprint and giving small “prizes” to the most economical one, talking to event attendees and debating in small spaces about environmental issues... broadening, in general, the concept of the music event and making it more accessible.

## 4. Applications for sustainable events

The best way to know whether an event is sustainable is for it to measure its carbon footprint. The carbon footprint is a measure used to assess the environmental impact of human activities and the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are generated because of those activities. Calculating the carbon footprint is an important tool for understanding and addressing climate change and environmental sustainability.

### What is the carbon footprint?

Carbon footprint is a measure that quantifies the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs), such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), that are emitted directly or indirectly because of a specific activity, process, product, or entity. It is generally expressed in units of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) to represent the combined impact of all GHGs.

### What is carbon footprint measurement?

Calculating a carbon footprint involves identifying, measuring and quantifying the GHG emissions associated with a particular entity or activity. This includes both direct emissions (e.g. the burning of fossil fuels in a vehicle) and indirect emissions (e.g. the production and transportation of the products we consume). Common sources of emissions include energy use, product manufacturing, agriculture, transport and more. Carbon footprint measurement relies on accurate and standardised data to accurately calculate emissions.

In summary, calculating the carbon footprint is a fundamental tool for assessing and addressing the environmental impact of human activities, contributing to the fight against climate change and promoting more sustainable practices. The following are some useful applications for assessing the sustainability of our actions.

**IMPALA:** Carbon calculator: Carbon footprint calculator dedicated to independent musicians developed by IMPALA (European Independent Music Companies Association) and Julie's Bicycle.

**#ActNow:** Application created by the UN (United Nations) in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. It contains a carbon footprint calculator and, among other functionalities, the ability to create groups with other users to create sustainability groups. Available in 6 languages (English, Italian, Spanish, French, German and Chinese).

