



Stockholms
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The guide to **Sustainable events**

Preface

This guide has been created to help organisers hold sustainable events and meetings. It is based on the City of Stockholm's vision and governing document "The City of Stockholm's events program", the goal of which is for Stockholm to be a leading city when it comes to hosting sustainable events.

Climate and sustainability efforts are fundamental to a sustainable urban development. In accordance with the city's environment programme 2030. The global goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development make up the basis for a sustainable development, and Stockholm shall be a leader in the implementation of the 17 global sustainable development goals.

The guide focuses on ecological/environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability.

The guide to sustainable events is based on the ISO 20121:2024 standard "Event sustainability management systems".

The guide can be read in its entirety or in separate sections. The first section, eleven pages in total, has three steps to guide you to creating a sustainable event and also includes a check-list.

The other sections go into some depth, explain and suggest measures to improve the sustainability of events. The guide is a living document and is continually updated.

Cover photo

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Summary

In this Guide to sustainable events we go through what the best options are for your particular event and what you should be considering in **Step 1: Planning**, **Step 2: Execution** and **Step 3: Follow-up**. The following are some general tips that you can use regardless of what type of event you are planning.

- **Organise the sustainability management**
Make sure that the sustainability management is supported at management level. Appoint sustainability coordinators before, during and after the event. When hosting large events, it might be worth bringing in an external consultant for assistance. It is important that key actors understand the event's sustainability profile. Determine what legislation applies to your event. Train all inhouse and external staff, including volunteers.
- **Choose a site based on environmental factors, safety and accessibility**
Choose a place based on transport options, as transports constitute a large part of an event's climate impact. Also consider safety and accessibility from a social perspective; and consider rent and working environment from a financial and social sustainability perspective. Choose a place that is suited to the event, which takes into consideration local ecosystems like land and water, and nearby residents who might be exposed to noise and traffic disruptions. Apply for the permits necessary to carry out the event well in advance. Make sure there are no scheduling conflicts with other events.
- **Maintain a dialogue with local residents and businesses**
Maintain a good dialogue with local residents and businesses who may be affected by the event to avoid annoyance and potential complaints.
- **Make demands of suppliers and co-organisers**
Impose sustainability requirements on materials and products from suppliers. It is important that they do not contain hazardous substances and they should be as recyclable and reusable as possible. Avoid disposable items and try to use products with adequate sustainability properties and ecolabels.
- **Food and drink**
Try to choose locally sourced and organic food. If meat is served, game and poultry have the least environmental impact. By choosing the right food and drink, the event's environmental impact can be significantly reduced. Avoid serving bottled water and set requirements regarding food labelling such as KRAV, Fairtrade, MSC etc.
- **Safety and security**
Create a safety and security plan that also contains a training portion for the event staff. Inform audiences and visitors of your safety and security work.
- **Communicate sustainability**
Communicating the sustainability management means positive marketing for the event, while setting a good example for other organisers. Marketing sustainability also strengthens the City of Stockholm's brand while attracting more visitors to the event as well as the region. Prioritise digital information and avoid print material if possible.
- **Evaluate the event**
Evaluate what has been working well and where there is room for improvement. Explain how you have contributed to increased sustainability and contact the City of Stockholm to share your views and experiences.

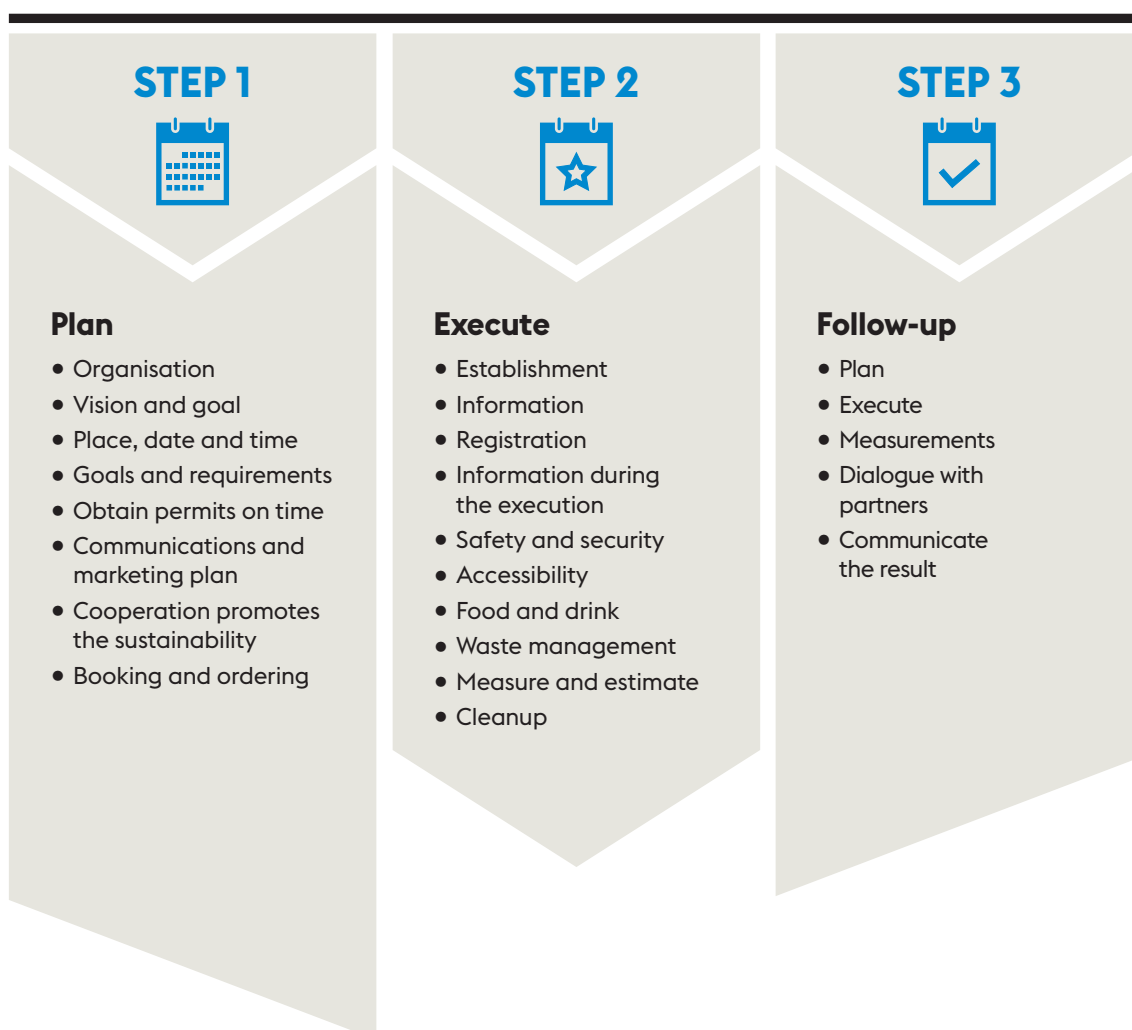
The Guide to sustainable events

The Guide to sustainable events

– An overview

The Guide to Sustainable Events integrates responsible social and environmental requirements to ensure that all events are carried out in a sustainable way. It contains tips and suggestions for all functions in the event organisation and process, regardless of whether it concerns a small meeting, a conference or a major event. Over time this creates long-term thinking and cost efficient events, and makes the events more attractive to participants and audiences.

The Guide is divided into three steps: planning, execution and follow-up, and includes a check-list. The later part contains more in-depth information.





STEP 1

Planning the event

The foundation for the event's sustainability goals is laid during the planning step. Having the right organisation, purpose, requirements, and communication will get you far. Below are a number of tips to keep in mind when planning the event. For more tips, see the links on page 11.

1 Organise the sustainability management

- Appoint a coordinator for the sustainability management.
- Make sure that the work has support within the organisation.

2 Purpose and goals of the event

- Define the purpose and set goals for the whole event.
- Set sustainability goals that are realistic, measurable and achievable.
- Obtain permits.

3 Select the place and date, taking into consideration:

- The purpose and goals of the event.
- Safety and security.
- Associability using communication aids and for people with disabilities.
- Communications.
- Transports.
- Other events happening before, during and after the planned event.
- Local area, residents, nature and animal life.
- Noise levels.
- Access to power sources.
- Budget.

4 Set sustainability goals and comply with laws and regulations

- Formulate measurable goals which can be evaluated.
- It is important that the goals can be achieved.
- Make sure that the goals and results are highlighted once the event is over.
- Comply with laws and regulations when it comes to:
 - Safety and security.
 - Noise, light, vibrations and waste for example.
 - Food and serving permits.
 - Alcohol and drugs.
 - Human Rights.

5 Communications and marketing plan

- Prioritise digital marketing whenever possible.
- Follow the City of Stockholm's instructions for exposure to utilise the city's opportunities for exposure. Feel free to seek other exposure opportunities through businesses and the city's local public transports.
- Use environmentally friendly materials for event design; banners, fence covers, program information. Avoid years and dates to allow material to be reused during future events.
- Use storytelling, explain how and why you work with sustainability.
- Maintain a dialogue with local residents before the event begins, give them one or more contact persons.
- Maintain manned information stations at the event – it is a good idea to open one shortly before the event itself begins to give visitors the best service.

6 Cooperation

- Conduct a sustainability analysis of companies and organisations that the event plans to co-operate with.
- Create together, with sustainability as a goal.
- Prioritise travel-free meetings with partners or hold meetings online if possible.
- Highlight the cooperation and how the sustainability work has created added value for both parties.

7 Booking and ordering

Carry out a sustainability analysis of suppliers regarding:

- Etableringsmaterial, ljud, ljus, scener, staket.
- Marknadsföringsmaterial; program, vepor, kläder.
- Mat och dryck.
- Program – artister, talare.
- Transporter.
- Resor.
- Logi.



STEP 2

Carrying out the event

During the event itself, it is important to follow up on set sustainability goals and requirements when placing orders and bookings with suppliers and participants.

1 Establishment

- Make sure that the site is safe to work on and that there is information and staffing where necessary to facilitate the establishment phase.

2 Information

- Prioritise digital information and manned information stations.
- Tell visitors about your sustainability management and follow up on the sustainability management during the event, addressing issues as they arise.

3 Registration

- Provide information about the event's sustainability work to create understanding and make the right choices more obvious.

4 Information during the event

- Provide information digitally, avoid materials such as brochures, schedules and programs.
- Be inclusive with your information (multi-lingual, hearing loops, sign language interpretation etc.).
- Give clear information for increased efficiency.
- Inform visitors about safety measures and emergency exits to increase security.
- Inform visitors about accessibility and possible adaptations.

5 Safety and security

- Provide information about the event's safety and security work to staff and other affected parties during the event.

6 Accessibility

- Follow up on how accessible the event is while it is taking place. Address any issues and include this in the upcoming evaluation.

7 Food and drink

- Make sure that the people serving food and drink are working according to the agreed sustainability perspectives.
- Make sure that permits and rules for handling of food and drink are complied with.
- Waste management is often a major issue during events. Make sure that it works as agreed and make adjustments
- to address any issues that arise during the event.

8 Waste management

- During the planning phase, a waste management structure is drawn up. This structure is then adhered to during the execution phase.
- Make sure that the structure is adhered to and make adjustments and address any problems.
- The City of Stockholm has local provisions regarding how waste should be sorted – adapt your management to the event's goals to minimise waste.

9 Measure and estimate

- Continuously review the project plan during execution, revise when necessary.
- Compile measurements specified in the event plan in the upcoming evaluation and report.

10 Cleanup

- Make sure that the site is safe to work on during cleanup and that the cleanup runs according to schedule.
- Waste management can become a major issue once the event is over. Make sure that there is a plan for transport, storage and management of left-over material.

**STEP 3**

Following up on the event

By marketing good sustainability results, the event brand can be further strengthened, and more participants can be attracted to recurring events. Examples worth mentioning include reduced climate impact, number of jobs created, local business activities and storytelling about how the audience perceived the event (can be measured through a follow-up survey).

1 Plan

- Were goals and the purpose of the event fulfilled?
- How did the planning phase work out?

2 Execution

- Was the event carried out as planned?
- Information
- Establishment
- Registration
- Safety and security
- Accessibility
- Food and drink
- Waste management
- Measuring tools
- Cleanup

3 Measurements

- Processing of collected materials.
- Conclusions from measurements.
- Potential for improvement.
- Proposed measures for a more sustainable event.

4 Dialogue with partners

- Feedback regarding the results of the event.
- Dissemination of experiences for future events.

5 Communicating the results

- Be clear about what went well and what did not.
- Communicate in order to constantly develop events in a more sustainable direction!
- Relate the results of the meeting or event to Agenda 2030 to bolster the sustainability communication

Check-list

The check-list corresponds to seps 1, 2 and 3. You can use it to easily check off the steps that have been completed.



Step 1: Plan

- ☐ Organise the sustainability management.
- ☐ Draw up goals and a strategy for your sustainability management.
- ☐ Apply for the necessary permits from the police and the City of Stockholm.
- ☐ Consider the local environment, transports, safety, accessibility and work environment when choosing a site.
- ☐ Consider holidays, other events and the surrounding area when choosing a date.
- ☐ Offer and communicate sustainable alternatives for travel and lodging.
- ☐ Carbon offsetting can be a good idea.
- ☐ Talk to local residents.
- ☐ Use online marketing that emphasises the event's sustainability profile.
- ☐ Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation.
- ☐ Ban on doping and drugs.
- ☐ Diversity and equality.
- ☐ Cooperation with local actors.
- ☐ Smallest possible climate impact.
- ☐ Lowest possible resource use.



Step 2: Execute

- ☐ Make sure that all information is up to date and available.
- ☐ Make sure that all establishment work is done before the event opens.
- ☐ Welcome participants/visitors/organisers/partners and provide information to help the sustainability management.
- ☐ Inform all parties about safety, security, and accessibility.
- ☐ Make sure that permits for serving food and drink are valid and that they comply with all other agreements.
- ☐ Waste management is followed up on throughout the event according to the City of Stockholm's provisions.
- ☐ During the execution phase, goals and outcomes
- ☐ set in the planning phase are measured and estimated.
- ☐ The cleanup is part of the execution phase. Plan it carefully to have a good, sustainable end to the event.



Step 3: Follow-up

- ☐ Measure and note how requirements and goals have been fulfilled.
- ☐ Send out surveys or questionnaires for follow-up.
- ☐ Plan to communicate the results of the follow-up.
- ☐ Hold a dialogue with the City of Stockholm after the event.
- ☐ If the intention is for the event to be recurring, plan to produce, prioritise and communicate improvements.



↓
**STOCKHOLM
TAP WATER**
a water from Lake Mälaren
↑

Useful links

Here you will find the main link which will take you to a sustainable event.

Compilation page on the City of Stockholm website

[foretagsservice.stockholm/evenemangsarrangör](https://foretagsservice.stockholm/evenemangsarrangor)

Other

Here you will find links to overarching environmental goals and information, as well as examples of other guides to sustainable events:

globalamalen.se

naturvardsverket.se

hsr.se

hallbartevenemang.se



About events and sustainability

Why is sustainability management important for events?

An event is a planned gathering at a certain time and place, to create an experience or communicate a message. Due to the broad contact surfaces created by an event, it can often become widely known and have an impact on different areas of society.

An event can actively work with sustainability in order to reinforce ecological, economic, social and democratic aspects.

A good sustainability profile indicates the ambition to develop, include and contribute towards a better social climate, which in turn increases attractiveness and builds the brand, not only that of the event but also that of the City of Stockholm.

What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development was established as a concept with the 1992 Rio Declaration and was defined as: “A development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable development requires a long-term and comprehensive view, alongside a global perspective.

Sustainable development weaves together three interlinked perspectives: the environmental, economic and social.

Environmental sustainability is a matter of economising with human and material resources.

Economic sustainability is a matter of combating poverty and ensuring that everyone can afford to have their basic needs met in relation to the earth's finite resources; in other words, an economic development that does not entail negative consequences for the ecological or social sustainability. The second perspective of “economic sustainability” provides the basis for being able to achieve the other goals. For this reason, the City of Stockholm needs to maintain

Social sustainability is a matter of striving towards a society that fulfils basic human rights.

Sustainability aspects



Environment

The framework for growth and development



Economy

Means of growth and economy



Social

The goal of growth and development

What are sustainable events?



Events

Planned gathering at a certain time and place, to create an experience or communicate a message.



Sustainable development

A development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

It is a matter of integrating the goals of a high quality of life, health and prosperity with social justice – in addition to preserving the earth's ability to sustain life in all its forms.

This requires a good balance between economic activity, environmental responsibility and social progress.



Sustainable events

The degree of sustainable development within the scope of the event.

In order to organise an event with a focus on sustainable development, organisers must look at the whole picture when all the various measures are being co-ordinated. For this reason, the sustainability aspects should take centre stage as early as the conceptual stage, which includes all participants, visitors, volunteers, suppliers, sub-suppliers, etc. It is also important to maintain a sustainability perspective when selecting a location for the event.

A sustainable development:

- leads to better execution,
- creates longevity,
- reduces resource consumption and
- increases attractiveness.

* Bruntland's definition from 1992.

Proposed measures



Environment

Important measures for an environmentally sustainable event

To reduce the climate impact of the event:

Transport

- Choose a location, date and time based on access to public transport and/or pedestrian and bike lanes.
- Facilitate and encourage climate-smart travel (e.g., agreement with SJ, SL, vicinity to public transport). Coordinate goods transports to the greatest extent possible.
- Make it easier for visitors to reduce emissions when travelling long distances.
- Consider whether physical meetings are necessary and prioritise travel-free meetings during planning. Make sure the event can be followed remotely online.
- Buy locally and comply with the applicable procurement regulations. When renting a vehicle, choose electric or environmental class.

Energy

- Set requirements for the facility's energy supply.
- Make sure to use green and eco-label electricity, or to apply carbon offsetting if you use other forms of electricity.
- If possible, set requirements for energy-efficiency in terms of accommodation or provide information about sustainable accommodation. If it becomes necessary to use a diesel generator, use green diesel.
- Use green light sources. If possible, hold the event during daylight hours (reduces the need for lighting).

Food and drink

- Plan purchases carefully to reduce food waste. Serve vegetarian food rather than meat.
- Choose meat with a low climate impact, such as game, poultry or fish.
- Serve seasonal foods.
- Serve tap water.

cont.



cont.



In order to minimise the direct and indirect impact on land, water, air, animals, humans and other local environment:

Food

- Choose suppliers who actively work with environment/sustainability.
- Serve sustainability-certified foods.
- Serve locally produced food in accordance with applicable procurement regulations.

Noise and other disturbances

- Contact the Stockholm Environment Administration if you have any questions regarding environmental considerations.
- Maintain a dialogue with the neighbours for increased comfort and understanding.

Land and water

- Host the event in a location suitable to its purpose and avoid interference with nature and the local environment wherever possible.

In order to minimise the use of resources and increase ecocycle adaptation:

Use of resources

- Rent quality-assured equipment: tents, audio, lighting, fences, tables, benches and mobile toilets.
- Consider the need for give-aways and other event materials.
- Avoid printed materials, use digital information.

Choosing designs and materials

- Use an event design that can be reused. As an example, avoid specifying dates and years.
- Only use reusable and recyclable products.
- Avoid disposable products.

Waste management

- Make sure that all waste is recycled in accordance with the City of Stockholm's local waste disposal regulations.
- Minimise food waste.

In order to avoid the effects of hazardous substances:

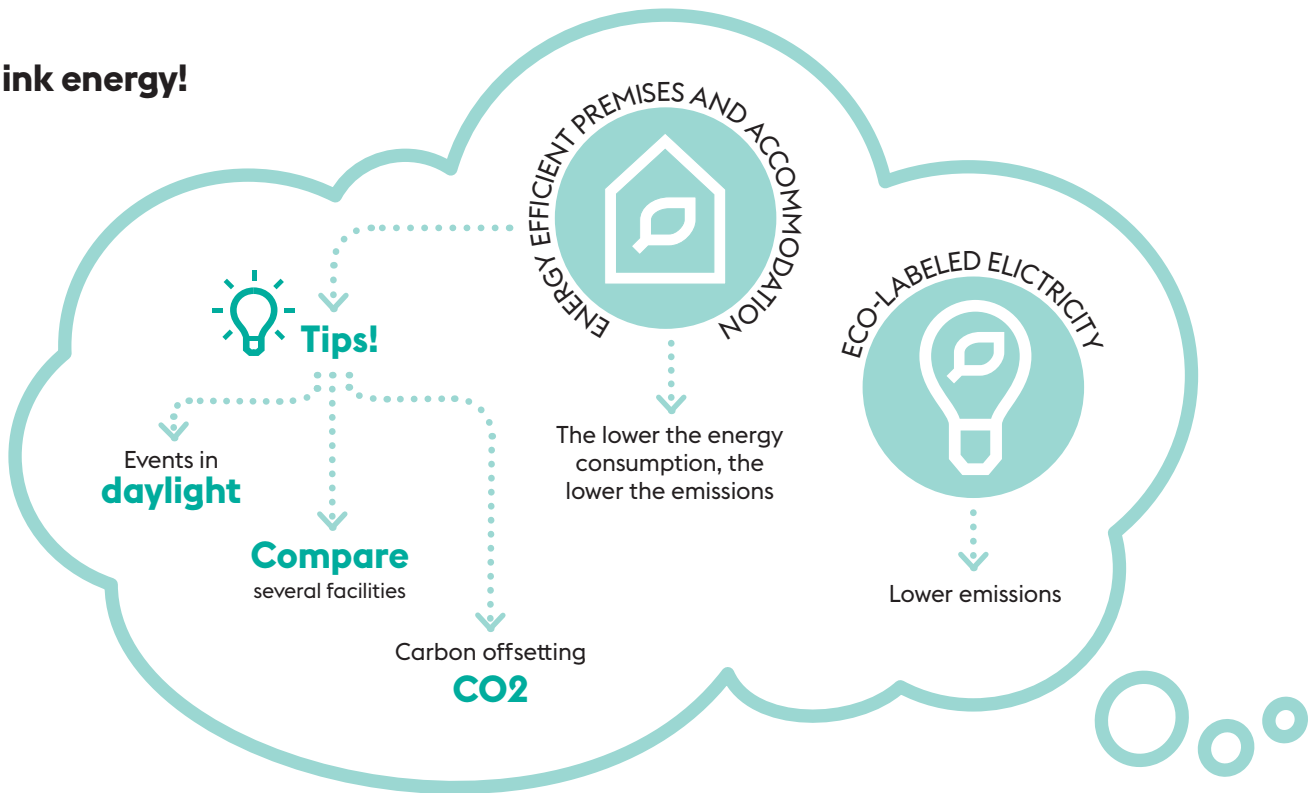
- Choose eco-label products wherever possible.
- Construction material. Use the BASTA database when choosing construction materials.
- It is important to store chemical products (cleaning, paint, fuel) safely and to keep a list of such products.
- See the link on page 12.

In order to maintain a good working environment at indoor events:

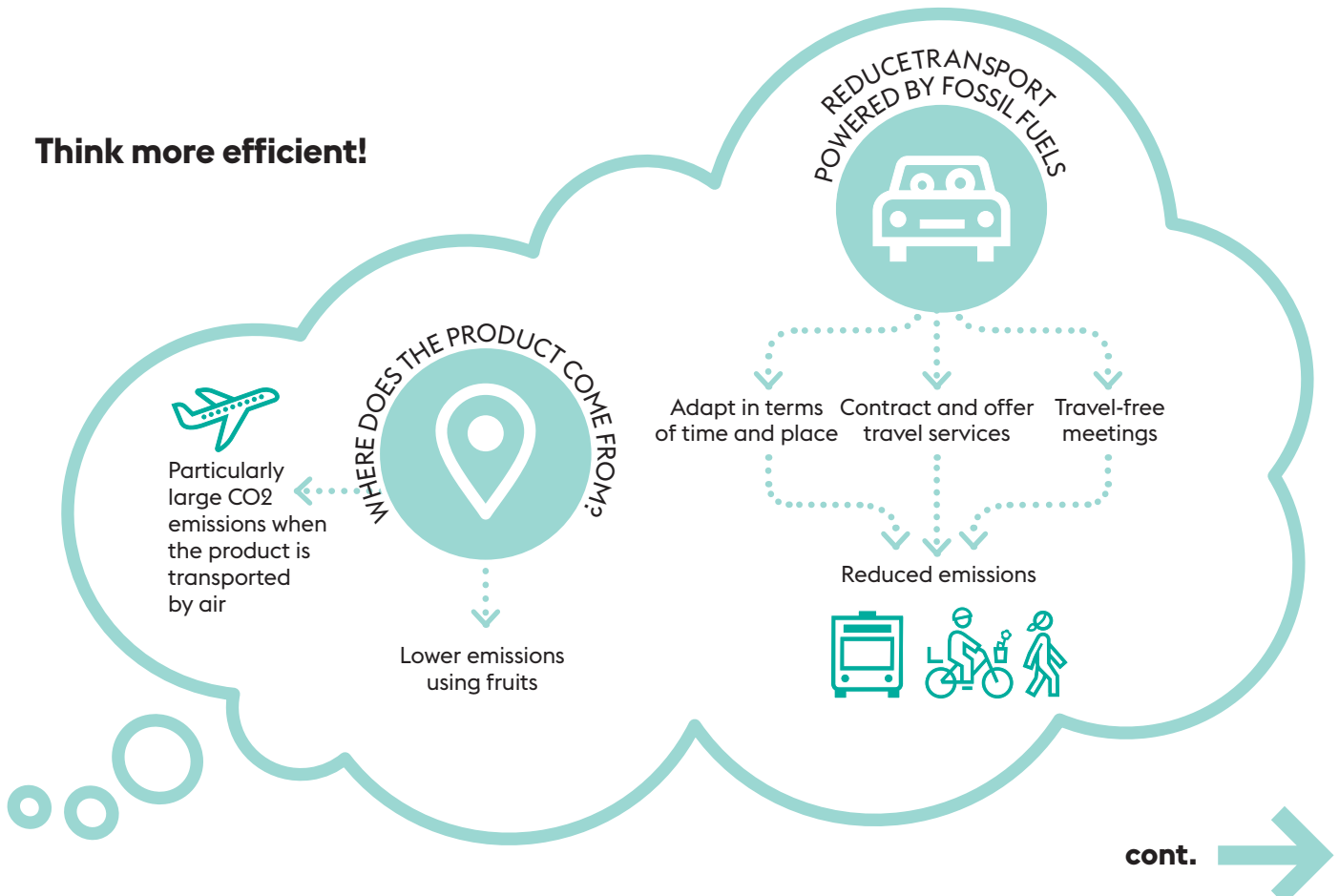
- Consult with the City of Stockholm regarding the applicable regulations for rented premises.
- Consult with the owner of the premises regarding the number of people allowed in the venue at any given time, study emergency exits, water supply and sewerage systems, regulations for serving food and drinks.

The right environmental mindset

Think energy!



Think more efficient!



cont.



Consider the event's impacts on air quality, animals, water, land, human beings and the local environment!

→ According to Chapter 2 of the Environmental Code, it is your responsibility as the organiser to ensure that the impact on the environment and on human health is as small as possible.



The waste ladder

Minimise the use of resources and increase ecocycle adaptation

Waste created in a festival area or during some other event where food and drinks are served is classified as comparable to household waste. Businesses such as restaurants and cafés produce waste comparable to household waste, and this refers to the waste generated by both preparation and serving of the products.

Only municipally procured contractors may collect household waste. As the organiser, you must therefore have an agreement with Stockholm Vatten och Avfall regarding waste collection for the duration of the event.

More information is available at this website:
stockholmvattenochavfall.se/evenemangssopor

- Cooperate with local waste management companies.
- Cooperate with the local water and sewage system proprietor – for water fountains and connections for restroom trailers or portable toilets for outdoor events.
- Plan all purchases carefully to reduce waste.
- Make sure the sustainability management is established among food and drink vendors, and also emphasise its importance.
- Recommend suppliers of sustainable plates, glasses and cutlery.
- Plan ahead for digital marketing and information dissemination, and communicate why.
- Find partners with a recycling focus – create together during meetings and events.
- Encourage those attending the meetings or events to sort their waste in an appropriate manner.





Economy

Important measures for an economically sustainable event

To promote employment, enterprise and positive economic effects

- Cooperate with local actors.
- Buy locally.

For a stronger brand

- Let the public know why you have chosen Stockholm.
- Highlight values such as knowledge, a smart city and education.
- Highlight how sustainability contributes to stronger brands.
- Highlight if the event has any other companies involved.
- Highlight the number of jobs created by the event.
- Provide information on your sustainability profile.
- Feel free to use storytelling to create a narrative.
- Publish and/or provide information about online sustainability reports.

To function in the long term

- Set prices so that as many people as possible can participate.
- Make estimations and calculations for the long term (life-cycle perspective).

In order to attain a positive financial result

- Adapt contents to demand.

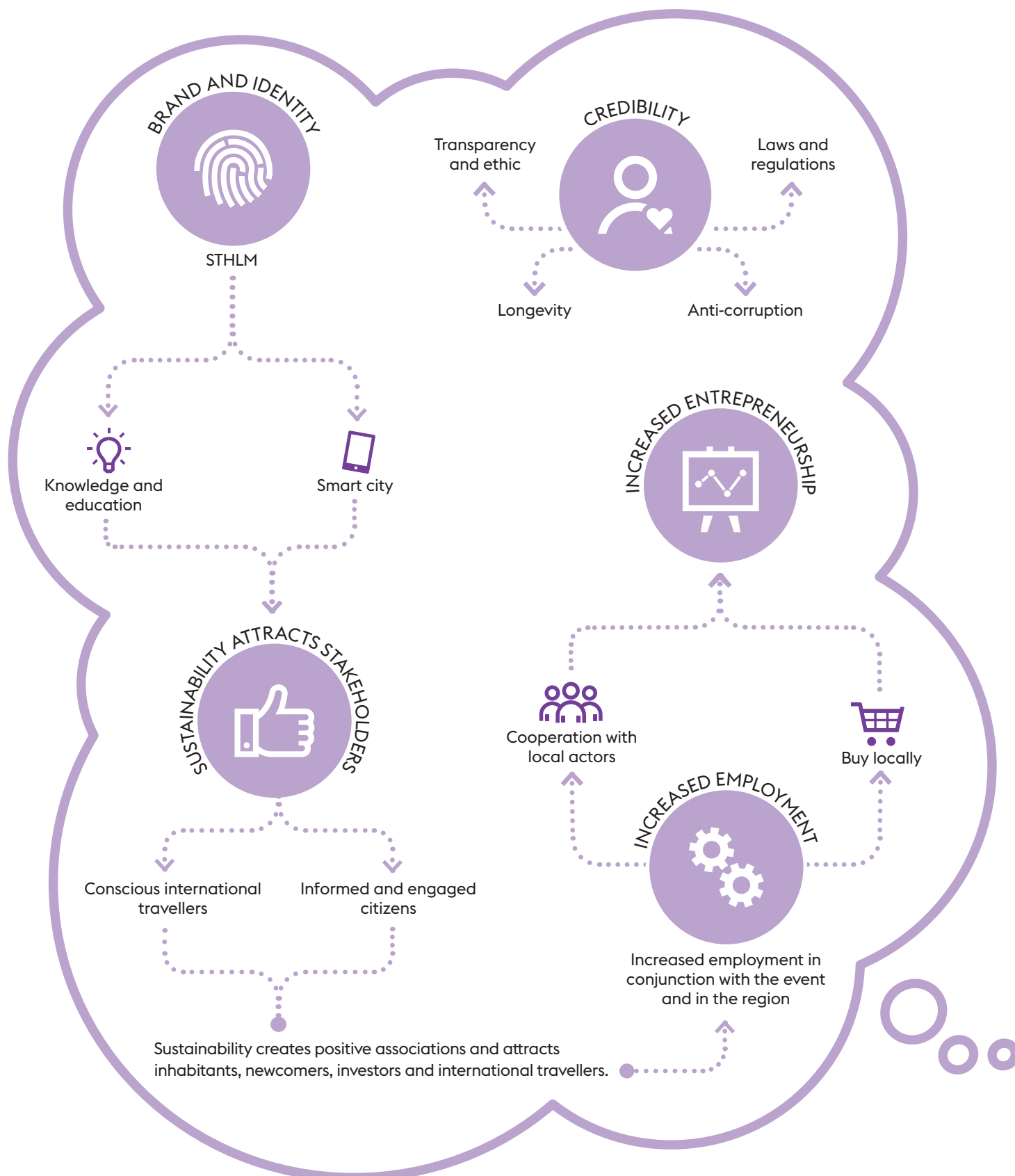
To counteract bribery and corruption

- Impose explicit anti-corruption requirements.
- Be thorough when it comes to transparency and ethics.
- Expose problems/faults immediately.

The right financial mindset

Think brand!

→ Branding is an important key to attractiveness and development.





Society

Important measures for a socially sustainable event

To create a sustainable event, you need knowledge, awareness and anchoring

- Insure that the sustainability management is supported at the managerial level in the organisation.
- It is always good to have a function that works with sustainability.

To create a good workplace environment

- Take care to create a good work environment and good working conditions for inhouse and external staff. Be attentive to how suppliers and sub-suppliers work with sustainability.
- Monitor the working environment during the event – be aware of legal and regulatory requirements.

To have knowledgeable and informed personnel

- Make sure that the people who represent the event are informed and work consciously to create a sustainable event.
- Make sure that the people who work for and with the event treat everyone equally and work actively to prevent discrimination.

To maintain a high level of security and safety, both actual and perceived

- Carry out a general risk and safety analysis for the whole event well in advance.
- Maintain a good dialogue with the neighbours, tell them about the content and purpose of the event.
- Plan so as to avoid noise and traffic disruptions in and around the event area.
- Provide information about the risk and safety analysis and produce a contingency plan. Inform the staff about this and make sure to communicate it in a suitable way to visitors, and also ensure compliance with it throughout the event.

cont.



cont.



To rule out discrimination and work to include vulnerable groups

- Make sure that the event combats discrimination and promotes equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, cross-gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age (in accordance with the Discrimination Act).
- Facilitate registration for the event.
- Offer food that is suitable for the majority of people and make sure that there are alternatives for those in need of a special diet.
- Consider accessibility for everyone, hearing loops, sign language interpreters and wheelchair access.
- Serving of alcohol requires a valid permit and a cordoned-off area with surveillance.
- Set requirements for and provide information about the zero tolerance of sexual offences and exploitation.

To keep a clear focus on diversity and gender equality

- Promote diversity and acceptance of this focus when planning the event. This applies to both staffing and scheduling.

To work against drugs and doping

- Provide information about the zero tolerance policy regarding all use of drugs and doping substances in conjunction with the event and demand that such a policy is implemented.

To maintain a high level of security and safety, both actual and perceived

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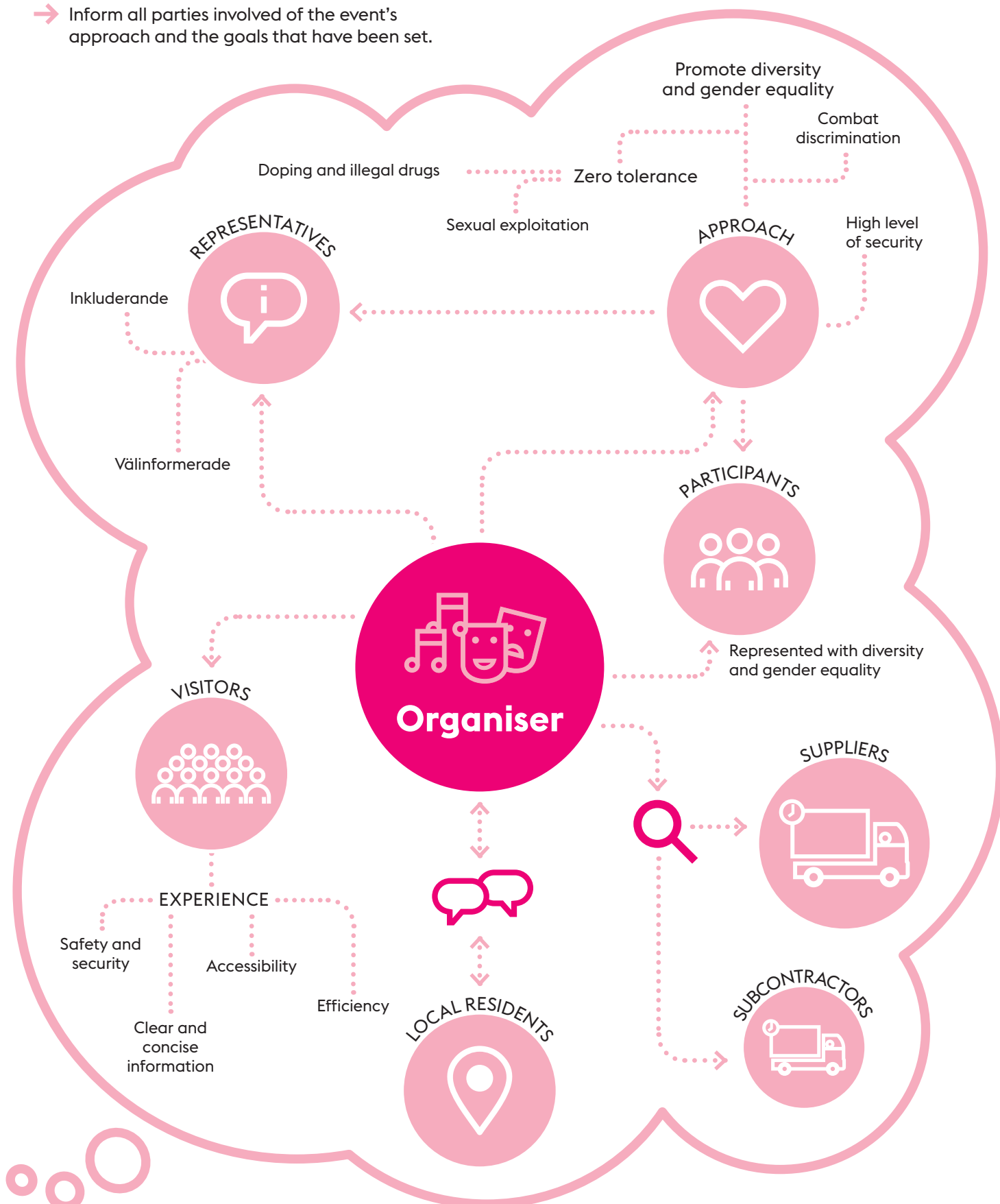
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- Set requirements for and provide information about the zero tolerance of sexual offences and exploitation.

The right mindset Society

Think inclusion

- Inform all parties involved of the event's approach and the goals that have been set.



Closing words

The City of Stockholm hopes that this guide to sustainable events has helped you with the planning, execution and closing of your event.

The guide will be continuously updated and we would be happy to receive your suggestions for improvements. The first version of the guide was published in March 2018. The current version was revised in April 2025.

It is our hope that this guide will inspire you to continue organising sustainable events.