

Guide to Sustainable Creative Production

ADVENTURES IN UTOPIA
SHAMBALA

kambe
sustainable events

About This Guide...

This guide aims to support all our creative folk to produce beautifully weird and wonderful projects as sustainably as possible.

Creative Production often involves many different materials, equipment and suppliers. The environmental impacts stretch far beyond the event in supply chains; from mining to manufacture; transport; how materials are dealt with after their useful life at an event; and how the companies who provide our products and services are managed.

We're aiming to be a fully 'circular' festival. Managing materials well is integral to achieving this, and we intend to eliminate waste from our culture and vocabulary, capture and recycle 100% of recyclable material onsite, and inspire new ways of working.



“Shambala is committed to being single-use plastic free, and at this point, we’re pretty much there!”

Our Sustainable Story so Far...

With the help of our audience, artists, crew and suppliers, we’ve been able to achieve a massive amount, by significantly reducing the festival’s impacts over the past decade we’ve become a pioneer of innovative practices! We’ve eliminated single use plastics, we use 100% renewable energy, we’ve reduced overall emissions by over 90%, and gone meat, fish and dairy milk free. Find out more on the website [here](#). In the festival world we are a shining beacon of pioneering practices - by exploring better ways of doing things and sharing our experiences we can continue to inspire events and people to make positive changes.

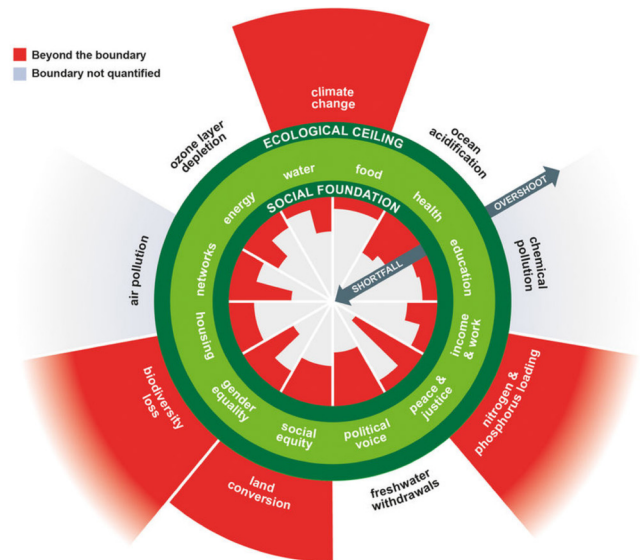


The Future: Circular Economy Principles

Currently over 2 billion tonnes of waste are created globally each year, and only 8.6% is recycled. We only have one earth, and it's our home, right. Resources are not only running out, but their use is leading to myriad issues leading to climate and ecological breakdown. Code Red.

For a great short video on the environmental and social impacts of linear economy, see The Story of Stuff film [here](#).

Circular economy, or 'donut economics' was coined by pioneering economist Kate Raworth. The model is an antidote to the current linear economy of 'take, make and throw away', and also provides a model that analyses both environmental and social impacts in relation to ecological limits and human wellbeing. It's exactly the kind of approach that's needed to help us manage the earth in a way that genuinely safeguards life for future generations.



Circular economy principles applied to managing materials...

In essence, circular materials management means:

- Reducing the amount of raw material used
- Extending the useful life of products and materials
- Designing products for reuse, repair and remanufacture
- Designing out waste and pollution
- Avoiding materials made with chemicals or hazardous materials

We really like the 7 R's model:

Rethink:

How do you achieve the same goal in a different way? For example, you can communicate your program digitally instead of printing booklets.

Reduce (or refuse):

Reduce unnecessary items such as confetti, balloons and giveaways.

Repair:

Repair (for example furniture) so that it can last another round.

Reuse:

Can a product such as drink or food packaging be replaced by a reusable alternative? Then give that preference.

Refurbish:

Create 'new' decorative material from existing objects as smartly as possible.

Recycle:

Choose a high-quality recyclable drinking cup with a return system. This makes the material actually circular.

Recover:

Did you go through all the above steps, but without success? In that case, incineration with energy production is the last – not circular – step.



Key things to consider when planning your Shambala project:

Think about the full **life cycle** of all the elements of your project.

Where are you sourcing items, how are you transporting them to site? Consider the **impact of the transportation**. Can they be sourced more locally to site?

Can you **hire** items instead of creating them?

What are you doing with the items **after the event**? You need to consider this for every element of your build but especially bulky items such as sofas, carpet, sofas and other furniture and large scale set pieces.

Have you designed your décor, set and props so they can be **reused or repurposed** easily? For example using less nails and adhesives makes a set easier to dismantle and transport and/or repurpose.

If you've considered all options but know that your décor has to be **recycled** make sure the materials you use are appropriate for recycling (do we have a recycling stream for it).

Please plan to take all your décor, sets and props away with you after the event (for **reuse** and **repurposing!**) – anything that can't be taken away should be designed so it can be **recycled** easily by us (see the waste hierarchy below).

Aim to:

Use reclaimed, reused, sustainably sourced and low impact materials.

Design for reuse and recycling (standard sizes, easily dismantled, long lasting or adaptable).

Use less energy or more energy efficient equipment in your build.

Work to reduce travel and transport impacts of both materials, kit, equipment and crew.

Storing Items On Site

- If it's been agreed in advance with our Site Coordinator that you can store items onsite until the following year, please note the following:
- Space is at a premium so please only store items you plan to use again and can't take away with you, such as fabricated venue flats.
- Pack flats onto a pallet (with the pallet central under the flats) and secure with banding – remember that items are stacked on top of each other, so the flatter the better. Please store any shapely items separately.
- If you will have some shapely items that you know you will be storing, please discuss with Christine ahead of the festival to discuss the most suitable option for storing.
- Please do not leave any décor at your pitch – any items that have been left without checking off with the site team may not be stored and end up in waste streams.
- Please label your pallet (or anything you plan to store onsite) with the name of your venue, venue manager name and a contact number. A year is a long time for us to remember which items belong to which venue, so it really helps to have your venue name on there.
- Please pre-arrange storing items with our Site Coordinator. Anything left without having pre-arranged can't be guaranteed space to be stored.
- We don't have the space to store any sofas, so please take them away with you or think about hiring them rather than buying

Procurement Policy

Everything we buy directly or provide through our resource ordering system is guided by our company Sustainable Procurement Policy. We ask that all festival-related purchases follow these principles:

- Waste reduction / end of life value
- Energy efficiency
- Minimising travel miles
- Supporting local and ethical businesses
- Meeting any specific standards/ certification that apply to that product or material

When making procurement decisions, ask yourself four questions:

1. What is it made of?
2. Where is it coming from?
3. What is it doing?
4. Where is it going? Could it be used again or repurposed for us or others?

In a nutshell, aim to:

- Buy local, ethical and from small businesses where possible.
- Avoid purchasing any single-use products, especially plastics.
- Only purchase timber-based products that are FSC certified.
- Purchase recycled paper/plastic products where possible – this may require sourcing different suppliers, so plan ahead.
- Prioritise sustainable purchasing options over others, but budget appropriately.



Focus Topics:

Materials to Avoid or Dispose of Safely

Toxicity seems to be a gigantic blind-spot in society today. The definition of 'toxic' is; a substance which causes harm [to the human body]. We are literally surrounded by toxins in the products we use and consume in our everyday lives, including beauty products, food, and materials.

We're aiming to be a 'toxic free' festival, and we are looking carefully at all the toxic materials present in our festival ecosystem.

Avoid these items on our official 'banned materials' list...

- Plasterboard! It can create toxic gasses in landfill and must be managed and buried separately.
- Expanding foam – it's a ecological nightmare and un-recyclable!
- Polystyrene
- Sofa's / old furniture (if you do bring items, please take them away)
- NOx canisters (used or not)

Please dispose safely the following...

- Paint tins containing paint: If tins are not completely empty, please take them with you to dispose off-site.
- Batteries: e.g. from radio mics, must be kept separate and recycled. Consider using rechargeable alternatives, and either take used items away with you or drop at the site office for safe recycling.
- Aerosol containers: Can be recycled with cans when empty.
- Gas canisters: Must be disposed of safely by a specialist contractor.
- Electrical equipment: widely recycled these days and must be dealt with by a specialist contractor – please take away with you.

Wood

Wood is a renewable resource, however sourcing responsibly is vital to avoid destruction of natural rainforests, biodiversity loss, and disruption of regional water flow and carbon sinks. One football field of forest lost every single second!

Things to consider when it comes to using wood in your build:

- Design with reuse in mind e.g. make it easy to take apart and store – we can store sets etc. between years onsite
- Timber can only be recycled if it's not contaminated with screws or nails!
- Choose FSC or PEFC certified to ensure it's from sustainably sourced forests
- Don't use MDF, OSB & plywood can't be recycled as composite materials stuck together with toxic glue (urea-formaldehyde (UF))
- Many finishes can make wood hard to recycle: Laquer, Paint, Stain
- Can you buy reclaimed or use off-cut wood?
- Look for a wood reuse project so people can buy your wood and reuse
- Avoid lauan or tropical hardwood/plywood and explore alternatives

Note: All of the wood we supply through our resources system is FSC or slab wood (waste product).

Carpet

Even if you are reusing/recycling used conference carpet, can you find a useful home for it after the event? Can you maintain it and keep it clean onsite (bring a Hoover!) and ensure it is going to be in a good state to be reused after the event. Does the venue really need carpeting? What else might help ensure a good flooring for your venue? e.g. a shoes off policy.



Paper and Printing

The environmental impacts of paper production include deforestation, the use of enormous amounts of energy and water in paper production, as well as water and air pollution from chemicals, and waste problems. Paper accounts for around 26% of total waste at landfills. Producing 1 kg of paper requires 2-3 times its weight in trees.

Tips for paper and printing:

- Use recycled, sustainably sourced, un-chlorinated, unbleached and uncoated

paper

- Prevent and reduce usage (we export 60% of recycled paper in the UK)
- Go lightest weight possible
- Only print what you need / print double sided
- Look for FC or PEFC certified paper
- Look for an iso14001 certified printing company
- Request water-based, vegetable or soy inks for printing
- Avoid a gloss or laminated finish (more pointless plastic)
- Avoid polyester and foamboard signage and single use signage

Fabric

Fabrics are surprisingly environmentally damaging, and also surprising to many is that cotton tops the list! Regular cotton farming pollutes the air, water sources, soils, endangering ecosystems, and human lives. It accounts for 16% of all insecticides, 7% of all herbicides, 4% of all nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizers worldwide. Cotton also requires a lot of water to grow. It's one of the most water-intensive crops: It takes about 20,000 litres of water to produce one kilogram of cotton (equivalent to a single t-shirt and pair of jeans, as reported by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)).

Things to consider:

- Design for reuse and storage- avoid dates and printing where possible
- Choose non-toxic materials e.g. organic or recycled where possible
- Look for local organisations/students/ designers to donate to if you haven't got another use for the fabric
- Prioritise alternatives to making costumes from scratch – there is an incredible pre-existing stock of costumes, clothing, off-cuts and fabrics available can you hire it, find it second-hand or repurpose some existing fabric
- When buying new fabric, look for certified organic textiles with a majority percentage of organic content.
- Purchase fabrics that will be suitable for machine washing to reduce the need for dry cleaning
- Buy fabric manufactured and located as close to you as possible to reduce transport emissions
- Avoid using toxic dyes and fabric paints – use natural dyes where possible
- Use environmentally conscious suppliers who are committed to improving the sustainability of their production and operational processes
- Launder clothes, drapes and other material at 30°C to save energy

Paint and glue

- Use low-impact glue and paints – look for zero or low Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) adhesives and water-based and low VOC paints
- Use our dedicated paint wash up unit that separates out the wastewater into paint waste and reusable washing water
- Use unfinished materials or try to use natural, low toxicity alternatives to treatments. For example, use natural varnishes and lacquers, raw oils like linseed, wax made from natural sources (petroleum free), and PVA adhesives
- Reuse someone else's old paint, or plan to donate your own leftover paint via the [Community Repaint project](#).

Note: Please take part-used pots of paint back with you, and use the paint and or dispose of properly – it's difficult and costly for us to manage this waste as a temporary event.

Plastic

Our addiction to plastic, and poor waste management practices, have affected the whole global ecosystem. Sea salt has been contaminated by microscopic plastic particles, and it is predicted that by 2050 the oceans will contain more plastic (by weight) than fish. Plastic is in our food and our bodies! Plastic contains hundreds of highly toxic persistent chemicals.

We've made real progress on plastic at Shambala, eliminating all single use by adopting reusable cups across all bars and for hot drinks. Please be part of Shambala's enduring quest to become completely free from 'pointless plastic' by observing the following:

- Use re-usable cable ties and/or re-use normal cable ties wherever possible – we know it takes time, and can feel like a pain, but

- Plastic glitter (AKA micro-plastics) is totally banned – bio glitter only please, or face paints instead!
- Try to minimize any plastic packaging you bring.
- Avoid using plastic-coated laminates for identification and signage where possible.
- Avoid using PVC and other hard to recycle plastics such as polystyrene, foamboard and polyester

When to use plastic

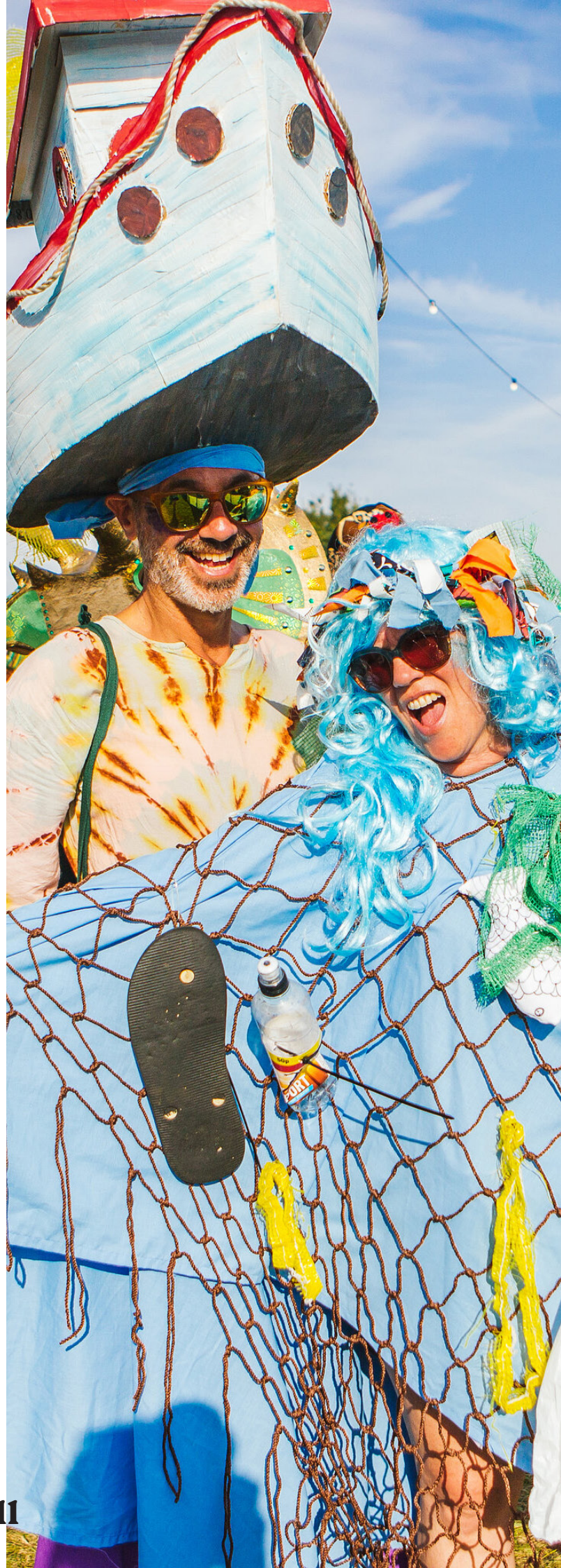
- When you will keep the material in use for multiple times or many years
- Where it is a single polymer and can be recycled back to its original form
- When your supplier has a takeback scheme and can 'recycle' it

Lighting sound and visuals

- Consider LED stage lighting to reduce energy demand and associated costs.
- Shambala asks for accurate energy specifications for all power usage onsite, if you need power take the time to work out how much power you really need – this enables our power company to plan confidently for demand, and avoid the over-sizing of generators.
- Opt for rechargeable batteries for microphones and stage equipment.
- Use energy-efficient equipment e.g. LEDs, tungsten rather than discharge lights, active PAs, low wattage amps

And finally... Be the change!

Please do whatever you can to make our adventures pioneering sustainable, bring and try new ideas, and tell us what we could do better. Thanks for your efforts!



Know Your Plastic Types

PET, HDPE, PP are the plastics most widely recycled in the UK.

As an example, the reusable cups we use for bars across site are made from PP, meaning that if they come to the end of their [long] life, they can be recycled back into cups. That's circular economy!

TYPE	USE	RECYCLED IN THE UK?
 PET/E		✓
 HDPE		✓
 PVC		SOME
 LDPE		✗
 PP		✗
 PS/EPS		✗
 OTHER		✗

Key Certifications



The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

An international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. It helps consumers to identify, purchase and use timber and forest products produced from well-managed forests.



The Blue Angel (Der Blaue Engel)

A German certification scheme covering different product groups. Its paper certification is generally considered the most stringent in Europe: paper must be made from recycled fibre and use no chlorine-based bleaching agents or other harmful chemicals during production.



The Rainforest Alliance

Certifies paper and timber products to FSC standard as well as its own Rainforest Alliance Certification, looking at chain of custody and sustainable forest management.



The EU Ecolabel

Helps to identify products and services that have a reduced environmental impact from the extraction of raw material through to production, use and disposal. There is an Ecolabel standard available for paper.



PEFC The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification

A global sustainable forest management certification system covering ecological, social, and ethical standards.



Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI)

A forest certification standard for sustainably managed forests considering mainly ecological factors. It is much more commonly used in the US.



The Rainforest Alliance

Certifies farms that meet the standards of the Sustainable Agriculture Network and protect workers, wildlife, habitats and communities.



The Soil Association

Certifies farms and businesses in the UK that meet UK, EU, and international standards on organic products as a minimum.



The Fairtrade Foundation

Addresses workers' and producers' rights. Certified products must meet certain labour conditions as well as minimum prices for farmers and growers. Please note that there is a lesser focus on environmental sustainability.

Useful Links

Practical Resources

- Salvaged scenery and props [Green Clover](#)
- [Community Repaint scheme](#)
- [Grown in Britain Campaign](#) for timber products
- [Forest Stewardship Council](#) certification
- [Make it British Directory](#)
- [Gumtree](#)
- [Ebay](#)
- [freeads](#)
- [TrashNothing](#)

Further Reading and References

- [What is the Circular Economy?](#)
- [Circular Design](#)
- [The Circular Design Guide](#)
- [The Story of Stuff](#)
- [Julie's Bicycle: Guide to Sustainable Production](#)
- [Plastic Free Guide to Festivals \(part of the Drastic on Plastic Campaign\)](#)
- [Waste Free Festivals Toolkit](#)
- [Julie's Bicycle Productions and Exhibitions Guide](#)
- [The Show Must Go On report \(2020\)](#)

