

Study Trip “Go Sustainable” A Successful best practice example with a focus on Sustainability

Zürich,
Switzerland.



The idea behind the Go Sustainable study trip

Sustainability is a topic that is gaining increasing importance in the events industry. Despite strong interest, there is still significant potential for improvement. With our study trip for professional event planners, we aimed to demonstrate what sustainable event planning can look like in practice. By considering all three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social, and economic – throughout the planning and execution, we set an example.

This document is intended as a practical guide for organizing events. The collaboration between the Zurich Convention Bureau and the Lucerne Convention Bureau – supported by the Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau UK – was born out of a shared goal: to welcome visitors in harmony with our beautiful cities and to showcase how mindful and resource-conscious event planning can succeed. The practical tips and insights are meant to inspire and do not claim to be exhaustive.



The Destinations

Lucerne – Lake Lucerne Region

Located in the heart of Switzerland, the Lucerne – Lake Lucerne Region impresses with its stunning natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and highlights such as the oldest wooden bridge in Europe and the UNESCO Entlebuch Biosphere. With top-class hotels and unique event venues like the Culture and Convention Centre (KKL Lucerne), the region offers ideal conditions for MICE events.

Zurich

Zurich is a compact metropolis with a high quality of life and is a major economic and scientific hub.

Its excellent global accessibility, outstanding public transport, short distances, and strong commitment to a livable future make Zurich the ideal destination for sustainable events.

From historic guild houses to modern business centers, the city offers the perfect venue for every type of event – whether for 10 or 3,500 guests.

Who is behind the project?

Tiffany Peter, Managerin Sales & Marketing (MICE) Lucerne

Tiffany started her career in the tourism industry with a strong focus on destination marketing and event support. After gaining practical experience through an internship at Luzern Tourismus, she joined the Lucerne Convention Bureau where she now plays a key role in promoting the region as a top MICE destination.

As Manager Sales & Marketing (MICE), Tiffany supports national and international event planners by offering tailored advice, organizing site inspections, and helping connect them with the right partners in the Lucerne – Lake Lucerne Region. Her deep local knowledge and passion for hospitality make her a valuable point of contact for planners looking for authentic and inspiring event experiences in central Switzerland.

Reto Konrad, Manager Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau UK & Ireland

Reto has 25 years of experience in the MICE industry. Since graduating, he has worked in numerous roles in hotels, convention bureaus and venues, in destinations across Switzerland. Reto is looking forward to sharing his knowledge and expertise of Switzerland with clients from the UK and Ireland.

Gregory Baur, Manager Convention Bureau, Zurich

Gregory graduated from hotel management school in 2013 and spent six years gaining experience in sales and event management in the Swiss 5-star hotel industry. He then moved into congress sales at the Zurich Convention Center, where he further deepened his expertise.

Since January 2023, Gregory has been part of the Zurich Convention Bureau, where he is responsible for destination strategies and market development in the MICE sector for the DACH and UK markets.

Reto Konrad



Tiffany Peter and Gregory Baur





Event Planning

Lucerne and Zurich jointly organized the “Go Sustainable” study trip. The central question during planning was: How can we integrate social, environmental, and economic sustainability throughout the entire customer journey?

From this, we derived goals and concrete measures for the periods before, during, and after the event, which are explained in more detail in the next section. Guided by the principle of maximizing the positive impacts of the event while minimizing the negative ones, we placed special focus on resource consumption but also developed examples addressing the social and economic dimensions of sustainability.

The 5R matrix helped us to critically examine the customer journey and resource consumption, aiming to keep raw materials in the cycle as efficiently and as long as possible. The 5R principles – refuse, reduce, reuse, repair, recycle – formed the foundation for environmentally friendly measures.

Go Sustainable – Results Matrix

The table below provides an overview of our ideas.

Phase / 5R Application	Pre-Event Communication	Arrival / Departure	Live Event	Post-Event Expectation's
Rethink / Refuse	• Avoid Printmaterial	• Train instead of flights – London to Lucerne to Zurich and back to London • Digital solutions for train tickets	• Floral decorations • GiveAways • Regional and seasonal menu's • Brochures	• Brochures
Reduce		• All participants traveled by train	• Food waste through correct portion sizes • Completely vegetarian menus • Bring your own water bottle • Share information via WhatsApp	• Minimise food waste (take home) • Sustainable packaging solutions
Reuse			• Bring your own water bottle • Food leftovers were collected and distributed by institutions or employees • Rent instead of buy	• Collect Lanyards • Reuse of unused event materials
Repair			• Repair of furniture or fixtures in the event area	• Damaged event materials Repair materials (e.g. banners, decorations), furniture, and technical equipment
Recycle			• Separate waste, set up recycling stations	• Collaboration with local environmental services and upcycling companies

Conclusion

For us, many opportunities arose to prevent resources from entering the cycle in the first place (“rethinking and refusing”). When this was not possible, we made efforts to reduce resources before and during the event. Keeping resources in the cycle through repairing and reusing proved to be more challenging. Our own (though not exhaustive) checklist “External Events” also helped us keep an eye on resource consumption during event planning.

Event implementation

The measures developed during the planning phase were implemented with the help and support of all stakeholders. The following examples serve as inspiration for future event planning.

Before the event: Raising awareness

Invitation process

Successful implementation of a resource-efficient event requires understanding and commitment from everyone involved. Through targeted communication, we were able to raise participants' awareness about the study trip's topic and manage their expectations. Careful selection of the target group also improved the quality of the participants.

Measures:

- We waved invitation cards and provided an informative [landing page](#).
- Personal addressing of a quality customer group (via email) was important to us. The event's purpose was communicated clearly.
- Three weeks before the study trip, we held an informative "Know before you go" Teams call with all participants.
- To improve social inclusion, we consistently used gender-neutral language.
- Creating commitment: Participants were informed in advance that a no-show fee would be charged, which would be donated to a charitable organization.
- During the study trip we created a "[link tree](#)" where guest always had the updates on the trip.

Collaboration with responsible partner companies

The selection of service providers plays a key role in implementing an event according to high sustainability standards. We deliberately chose partner companies that could demonstrate their commitment to the environment and sustainability through concrete measures.

Just as with the participants, it was important to us that our partners also made a strong commitment to the event's sustainability goals and raised awareness where necessary.

Measures:

- We exclusively considered partner companies that demonstrate strong environmental commitment through concrete measures. In our selection, we followed the "Checklist for External Events" and recognized [sustainability labels](#).
- We organized a partner call during which we briefed the companies on our criteria.

Measures for ecological sustainability

Environmentally friendly transport options

The arrival and departure to and from an event have a significant impact on its environmental footprint. Therefore, a venue with short distances is preferable. The choice of transportation can be influenced through incentives. Thanks to the well-developed public transport networks in Lucerne and Zurich, we were able to organize environmentally friendly, clean, and safe local transportation even for larger groups.

Measures:

- Participation in the study trip required arrival and departure by public transport.
- In collaboration with, Eurostart, TGV Lyria, SBB and Switzerland Tourism, we provided a convenient ticket solution for each participant.
- Guests from UK received the Swiss Travel Pass.
- Train compartments were reserved for the group to ensure a comfortable journey.
- At the destinations, we travelled exclusively by boat, train, or tram.
- All guests received a complimentary public transport ticket.

Waste Reduction

Even in the lead-up to the event, we implemented measures to reduce waste. Through clear communication and the careful selection of partner companies, we were able to successfully implement many of these measures and move closer to our goal of hosting a circular event.

Measures:

- Throughout the entire event, PET bottles were avoided. All participants brought their own refillable bottles (BYI Bottle). In addition, no printed menus were used.
- Instead of cut flowers, herbs were used as table decorations. These were later used in the kitchen, allowing us to completely avoid cut flowers.
- A "Taste the Waste" cooking workshop raised awareness among participants about food waste in a practical and engaging way and was a popular part of the supporting program.
- All name badges were made from recycled materials; the lanyards were reused and provided by Zurich and Lucerne.
- At the event venues, only half portions were served by default, with second helpings offered upon request. Any leftover food was offered for takeaway or collected by social institutions.
- In the afternoon, we deliberately skipped the usually unnecessary snack breaks.
- Products for the coffee break were sourced from "Ässbar".
- Event venues deliberately served half portions, with additional servings provided only upon request.

- The event program was not printed on flyers but made available via a QR code on the badge and on an edible apple.
- No physical giveaways were distributed, but a [Spotify Playlist](#) and a [Map](#) has been created.

Measures to social sustainability

Social Programs: Meet the Locals

In addition to professional exchange and knowledge transfer, team activities and networking are important aspects of events. When designing these programs, we focused on team building while also enabling interaction with locals to create authentic experiences and raise awareness of the local community.

Measures:

- We offered a jogging session through residential neighborhoods with locals and “Talk & Walk” tours with local guides.

Collaboration with Social Institutions

We also paid attention to social criteria when selecting our partner companies and collaborated with institutions distinguished by their strong social commitment.

Measures:

- With the venue “Neubad” in Lucerne and the St. Jakob Foundation in Zurich, we supported social institutions that are exemplary companies in the field of work integration.

Measures for Economic Sustainability

Promotion of Local Value Creation

Responsible action also means achieving economic stability and added value without depleting resources. Therefore, when organizing the study trip, it was important to us to involve as many local businesses as possible.

Measures:

- We included local catering providers offering consistently regional cuisine.
- The visit to the guild house indirectly supported local craftsmanship through foundation contributions.

Generating Concrete Inquiries for Destinations

For the study trip itself, we set the goal of increasing concrete inquiries for our destinations and partner offerings.



Measures:

- During the event, we created suitable opportunities to discuss business opportunities and generate qualified customer contacts (in-house fair, seating arrangement at dinner).
- Partner companies and program offerings were presented, and their visions shared, significantly increasing understanding and interest in the offerings.

Customer retention and enthusiasm

A business event is particularly successful when guests leave with valuable insights and new contacts that last long after the event. The study trip stood out with a content-rich program, and the hosts fostered a sense of community throughout the entire event.

Measures:

- The Zurich Convention Bureau and Lucerne Convention Bureau encouraged guests to voluntarily post or comment on social media.
- Added value through content: In a workshop on “Circular Events,” industry-relevant topics were developed and discussed with the participants.
- After the event, clients received all the information and insights they experienced and collaboratively developed during the event.

Insights

Through targeted planning and clearly defined measures, we succeeded in creating a sustainable and innovative study trip that is both inspiring and pioneering for the events industry. The “Go Sustainable” study trip showcased the beauty and diversity of the Zurich and Lucerne regions and served as a shining example of how sustainability and the event industry can go hand in hand. To encourage as many event planners as possible to follow our example, it was important from the outset to provide useful tools, information, and documents and to share our experiences and insights.

Transport by Public Transportation

The arrival of all guests by train instead of by plane or car naturally contributed significantly to reducing CO2 emissions. Even today, incentives still need to be created to encourage participants to switch to rail travel.

Our study trip demonstrated that transport by public transit is a practical and at the same time exciting solution even for large groups. This shared adventure strengthens the sense of group cohesion and promotes solidarity.

Circular Economy

Adhering to the principles of the circular economy proved to be challenging. Measuring food waste in particular was difficult, as waste can already occur during product procurement. This requires precise planning and creative solutions to be implemented. The reliance on local suppliers and services is high, which necessitates careful selection.

Event Design and Customer Acquisition

Especially with a fam trip, it is a major challenge to reach and attract the right target audience. For the first time, we designed a fam trip around a specific theme and consistently integrated relevant content. The participants not only visited and got to know places but also received industry-related information. This resulted in the above-average quality of participating guests, which in turn improved networking opportunities and led to high satisfaction. Early and clear communication of the program and project vision helped to manage expectations.

Another positive aspect was the community building, fostered through the creation of a WhatsApp group. It strengthened the sense of community, facilitated communication among participants, and enabled continuous exchange beyond the trip.

The involvement of all partner companies from the very beginning proved to be crucial for the success of the project. Early integration made the partners feel more connected to the project and more aligned with its goals. Particularly encouraging was the openness and interest of social institutions and projects, which contributed significantly to the successful organization.

In summary, the study trip was successful not through sacrifice, but through creative solutions and a clear focus on the three dimensions of sustainability. With sufficient lead time, new approaches can be developed that are sustainable ecologically, socially, and economically.

Appendix

Selected feedback from participants:

Lucy Stockdale Project Manager, First Events

"Yes, I think for certain groups it would be ideal to travel by train. For example, I would propose this for an incentive group, provided they are all leaving the same location. On the train they can network and do fun activities to start the event. Some short corporate meetings may not be as easy to travel by train, especially with MDs who are very limited on time."

Kelly Peck Project Manager, Mci UK

"Given how seamless all the transitions are, and how it's possible to make the journey part of the overall experience (e.g. by gamifying it with quizzes and activities, pairing up attendees with someone to chat to, or simply giving guests a chance to catch up on work in comfort), I can really see how we can further encourage the events industry to explore slower travel."

Bethany Edwards Events Consultant, BCD M&E

"Yes, absolutely. Both professionally and personally! The hardest bit will just be getting the buy-in from clients, because the thought of such a long journey does seem quite daunting until you actually experience it! But I will be working hard to convince people, where it's a feasible option - I loved how much more social it was than flying, it felt much calmer, smoother and less tiring. It was also lovely having the option for those who wanted a little more privacy or quiet to have a seat by themselves, while those wanting to chat and connect with others could do so in the group seating. The wonderful food and drinks made it a fantastic experience, on the way back in particular it really did feel like going out for lunch/dinner with friends which was lovely!"

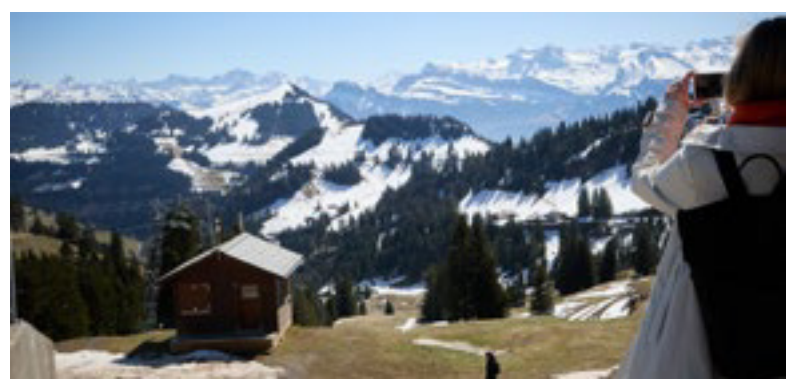
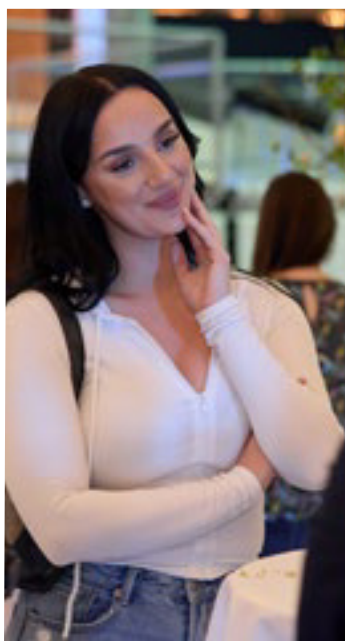
Media coverage: LinkedIn & Blogs

- [POWWOW Events](#)
- [Visual Response](#)
- [Post & Video Anna](#)
- [Jagged Horizons - Lucerne](#)
- [Jagged Horizons - Zurich](#)
- [Event Decision](#)
- [Mash Media](#)
- [Conference News](#)
- [Prestige Events](#)

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Responsible Event Review

Benchmark v. Industry Performance

Proudly presented to

Go Sustainable

Hosted by

Zurich Convention Bureau



ENVIRONMENT



SOCIAL



GOVERNANCE



Certificate Date

27th Feb 2025

FOUNDATION

MEDIAN

ADVANCED

DISTINCTION

This event is self-assessed as in the fourth quartile, (75th - 100th percentile) of all events reported via Impact in adoption of Environmental, Social and Governance planning and delivery factors

impact@eventdecision.com

This event has been assessed across 30 event-specific Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors. Factors can be input as Positive (event is actioning this factor), as Neutral (event is not actioning this factor) or as Not Applicable to this format of event. Data points are benchmarked against all events assessed via the event:decision Impact tool.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Matt Grey

DIRECTOR

event:decision



event:decision
track

**Business
Destination,
Zürich,
Switzerland.**

Go Sustainable in Zurich and Lucerne 2025

Post-event carbon footprint report

Host organisation: Zurich Convention Bureau

Event: Go Sustainable in Zurich and Lucerne 2025

Event date: 3-6 April 2025

Location: Zurich and Lucerne, Switzerland

Date of assessment: April 2025



Your track report

Results

Shows the total calculated carbon footprint associated with your event, by event function.

Benchmark

Displays your event carbon footprint, represented by the number of delegates or by the number of square metres of booth/stand/activation. This is benchmarked against other event measurements calculated by event:decision. Can be referred to as emissions intensity.

Mitigation

Initial advice on potential mitigation of impact. Additional mitigation consultancy and advisory is available on request.

Offset

An illustration of a range of costs associated with purchasing certified carbon credits corresponding to the results above, to deliver the event calculated by event:decision on a carbon neutral basis.

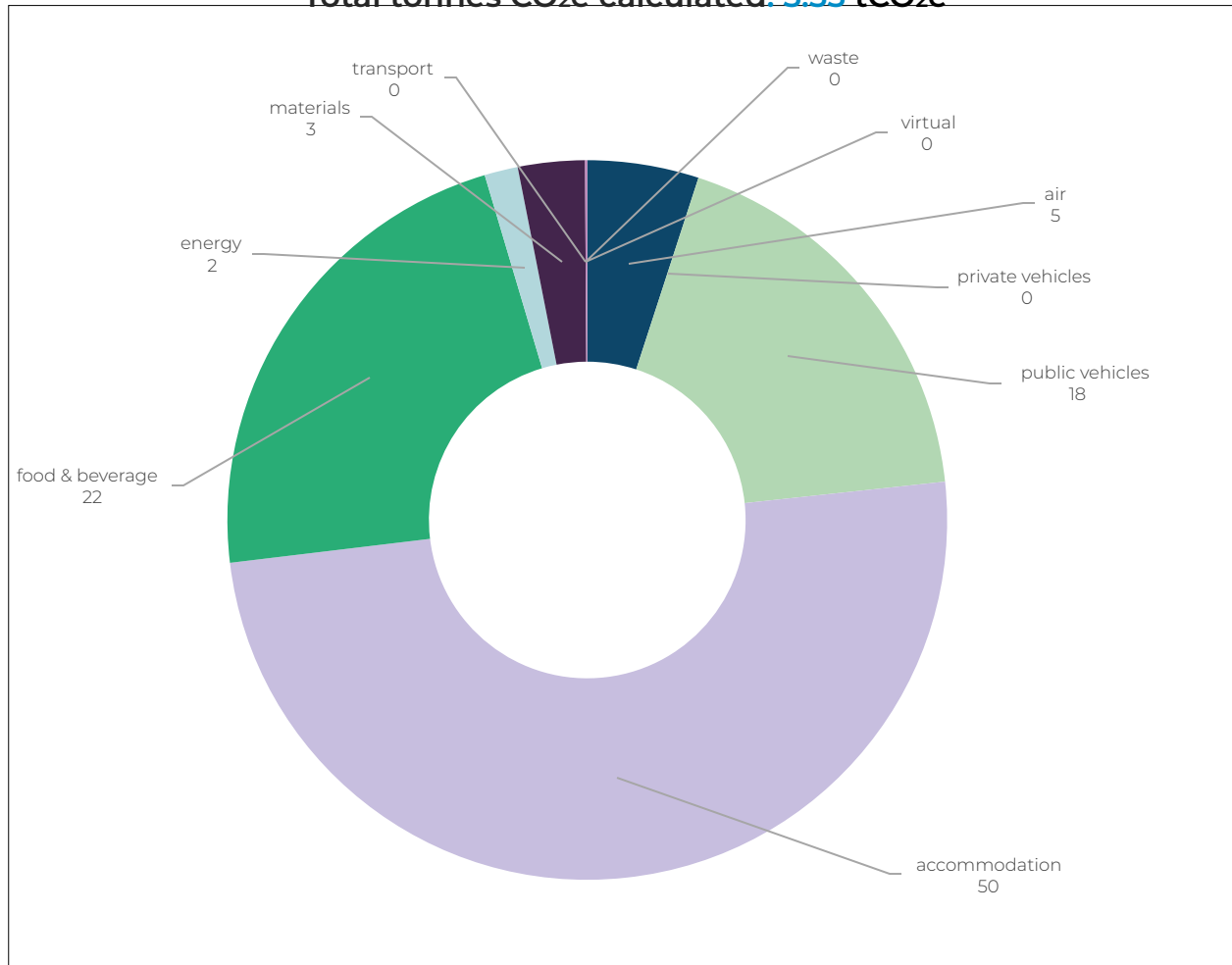
Brief

- Data shared by: Zurich Convention Bureau and onsite observations by event: decision
- Delegate numbers: 34
- Travel: Estimated travel via public transport to/from London St Pancras, one return flight from Northern Ireland. Travel by Eurostar, coach transfers and TGV Lyria to Switzerland, with travel by train and tram in-country, both private and public.
- Accommodation: 25 hotel rooms included for Wednesday night, due to the 7 am departure from London St Pancras. Hotel Waldstätterhof/Hotel Continental Park (Lucerne) and 25hours Hotel (Zurich).
- Food & beverage: Based on an estimated 80% meat and 20% vegetarian split for meals served during transit, and 100% vegetarian whilst in Switzerland. An average has been calculated for alcohol consumption.
- Crew travel, accommodation and subsistence included, as per data received with estimates used for scarce data.
- Energy, materials and transport: Power draw, materials, and transportation included as per data received with estimates used for scarce data.
- Waste: Re-useable, recyclable and single-use materials calculated as per data received with estimates used for scarce data.

Total emissions

Go Sustainable 2025

Total tonnes CO₂e calculated: **5.35 tCO₂e**



Boundaries:

event: duration (days), guests (where applicable), staff, crew, event area (sqm.)

travel: guest, crew and staffing travel by mode (air, private vehicle, public transport) class and distance.

accommodation: hotel nights for guests, build crew or stand staffing, by star-rating.

catering: includes number of meals (non-vegetarian, vegetarian, vegan) consumed by guests, crew, build staff for duration of event.

energy: actual consumption as estimated or measured by venue (kWh), calculated as renewable or non-renewable as applicable.

materials: printed matter, plastics, recyclable materials and other materials used in stand / activation builds & delivery.

transportation: transported weight of AV, materials, furniture and other stand-based items, distance and mode of transportation.

waste: recyclable and residual waste.

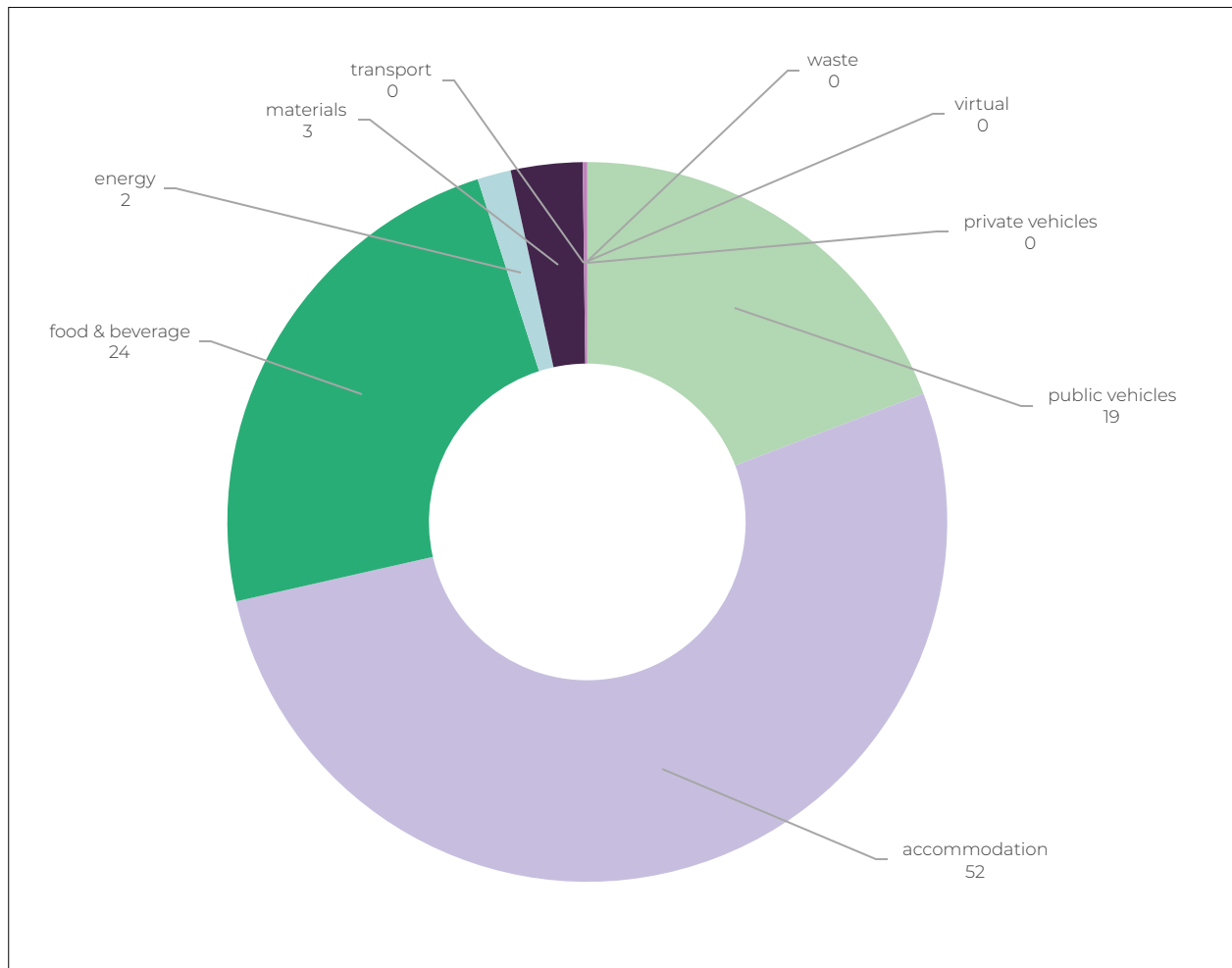
note: a result of 0.00 tCO₂e does not indicate zero emissions, merely that the category reports fewer than 10kg CO₂e when reported in tCO₂e to two decimal places.

	Actuals tCO ₂ e	%
Air	0.27	5
Private vehicles	0.00	0
Public transport	0.98	18
Accommodation	2.66	50
Food & beverage	1.19	22
Energy	0.08	2
Materials	0.16	3
Transport	0.00	0
Virtual	0.00	0
Waste	0.01	0

Total emissions excluding flights

Go Sustainable 2025

Total tonnes CO₂e calculated: **5.08 tCO₂e**



	Actuals tCO ₂ e	%
Private vehicles	0.00	0
Public transport	0.98	19
Accommodation	2.66	52
Food & beverage	1.19	24
Energy	0.08	2
Materials	0.16	3
Transport	0.00	0
Virtual	0.00	0
Waste	0.01	0

Boundaries:

event duration (days), guests (where applicable), staff, crew, event area (sqm.)

travel: guest, crew and staffing travel by mode (air, private vehicle, public transport) class and distance.

accommodation: hotel nights for guests, build crew or stand staffing, by star-rating.

catering: includes number of meals (non-vegetarian, vegetarian, vegan) consumed by guests, crew, build staff for duration of event.

energy: actual consumption as estimated or measured by venue (kWh), calculated as renewable or non-renewable as applicable.

materials: printed matter, plastics, recyclable materials and other materials used in stand / activation builds & delivery.

transportation: transported weight of AV, materials, furniture and other stand-based items, distance and mode of transportation.

waste: recyclable and residual waste.

note: a result of 0.00 tCO₂e does not indicate zero emissions, merely that the category reports fewer than 10kg CO₂e when reported in tCO₂e to two decimal places.

Illustration of **Go Sustainable 2025**, carbon footprint:
tCO₂e per delegate, based on **34 delegates** **5.35 tCO₂e** =
0.16 tCO₂e per person



At this level, **Go Sustainable 2025** is within the **55th percentile** of conference format events measured by event:decision, on a per-delegate basis.

Alternatively, this metric demonstrates that if all in-person events measured by event:decision were presented with '0%' being the lightest in terms of emissions per person and 100% being the heaviest in terms of emissions per delegate, this event would be in the 55th percentile.

Based on calculations conducted by event:decision from Mar 2021 – present for comparison purposes only. Data above should be used for illustrative purposes only, not for ESG audit or offset reporting. Total event data includes events from 50 to 140,000 delegates in virtual, hybrid and in-person event formats at a local, regional and global level, with stand-builds from 6sqm. to 2500sqm.

Mitigation

Suggestions of how to potentially reduce the environmental (emissions) impact of this type of event.

Travel

Highlights

Go Sustainable effectively showcased the ease and benefits of traveling from London to Switzerland via Eurostar and TGV Lyria. This approach not only enhanced the delegate experience by providing extended networking opportunities, but also **avoided** approximately 7.74 tCO₂e in emissions from delegates flights alone without factoring in crew.

Opportunities

To enhance data accuracy, consider using the low-carbon travel tool from YouSmartTHing and event:decision that promotes lower-emission transport options while capturing relevant data for reporting. While most travel was pre -arranged, limited information was available regarding shoulder travel—specifically, how delegates arrived at and departed from London St Pancras International. For guidance on implementing this solution, [contact event:decision](#).

Accommodation

Highlights

Hotel Waldstätterhof took a simple yet impactful step to reduce laundry volumes by providing just one pillow and towel in single-occupancy rooms. By making this decision at the business level rather than leaving it to the consumer, the hotel ensured a consistent reduction in water, energy, and chemical use—while also extending the lifespan of linens and realising overall financial benefits. In future, the hotel may wish to consider how this is communicated to guests.

Opportunities

While most of the hotels used had sustainability policies and initiatives in place, the majority were 4-star establishments, which inherently carry a higher environmental footprint compared to more basic accommodations. By reducing the standard (all other factors remaining unchanged) the accommodation emissions profile could be reduced by 43%.

Additionally, due to the early departure from London St Pancras International, over half of the delegates required an overnight stay in London. For future events, it may be worth reconsidering the start time or offering alternative accommodation options with a lower star rating or stronger sustainability credentials.

Food and Beverage

Highlights

The event's vegetarian menus proved that plant-based dining can be both flavourful and satisfying, challenging the notion that it lacks variety or depth. A highlight was the visit to social enterprise Neubad Lucerne on the first night, offering a unique dining experience while reinforcing the value of community-driven sustainability.

Opportunities

By offering a fully vegetarian menu throughout the event, some delegates chose to purchase additional food outside the programme. While this hasn't been factored into the emissions calculations, it may be worth considering the overall delegate experience. Striking a balance between some vegetarian menus and then locally sourced, seasonal ingredients that could enhance satisfaction. Additionally, exploring pre-order options for vegetarian meals during transit—particularly where supply chains are less transparent—may further support sustainability goals.



Offset

You may choose to offer certified carbon credit solutions via event:decision, or via a channel within your agency or client organisation. Please [contact event:decision](#) for a menu of certified providers and projects.

[Go Sustainable 2025](#)

5.35 tCO₂e

Offset total dependent on project & provider chosen from £5 /tCO₂e - £25 /tCO₂e:

£27-£134

To offset carbon emissions for your event excluding flights:

[Go Sustainable 2025](#)

5.08 tCO₂e

Offset calculation dependent on project & provider chosen from £5 /tCO₂e - £25 /tCO₂e:

£26-£127