

The Real Impact of Events in Europe

2025 BENCHMARK: DATA & INSIGHTS

my impact tool

.com

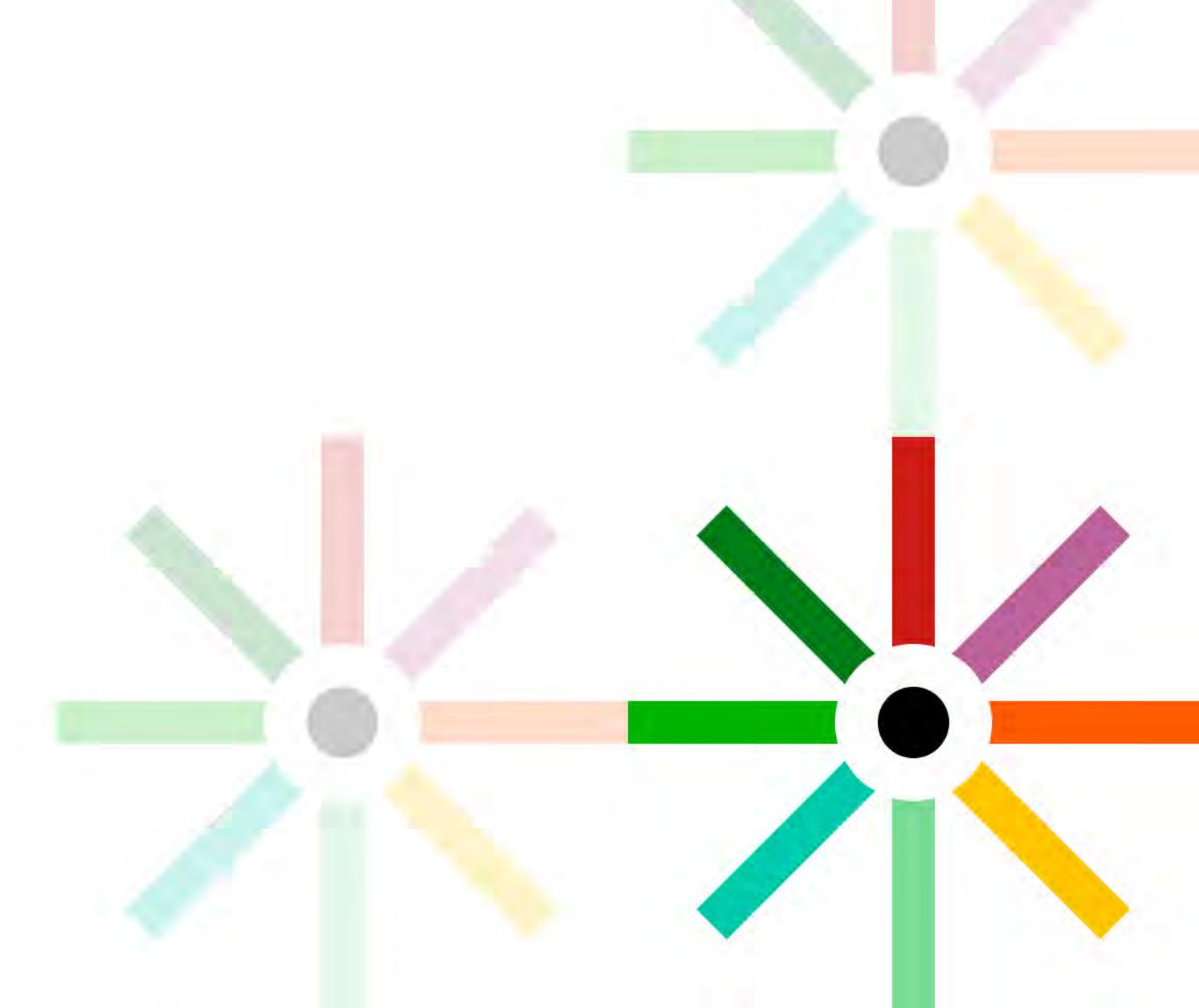


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Understanding our approach

Here is the final conclusion

The cheat sheet



56 pages. That might sound like a lot. That's why we created this cheat sheet just for you: a sharp summary of what really matters. A shortcut through the key numbers, before you dive into the full thing.

We didn't shrink the content just to make it shorter. We made it visual, digestible, and built for action. Because this benchmark isn't just a read, it's a tool.

→ Head to page 26 for 5 highimpact actions that actually move the needle. That's a good place to start, if you're not sure where to start.

of events claim to be accessible for all

> of emissions come from mobility (staff, audience, freight)

of emissions come from mobility when we focus on international events

more CO₂e for international events than for local ones

Average kg of CO₂e per participant per day (including mobility):

for national events

for international events

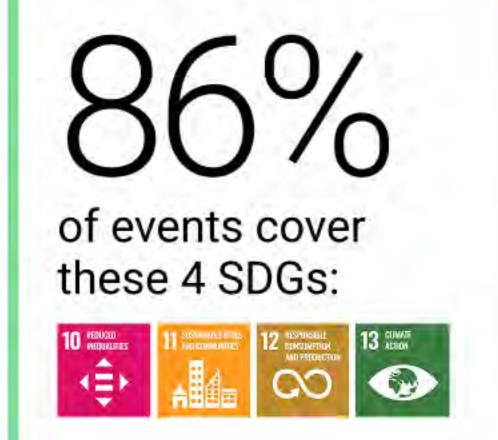
of events offer

of events increase

global pollution

inclusive catering (e.g. dietary or cultural options)

CO₂e reduction related to catering, with a vegetarian menu







CHAPTER 01

First, some context





We track everything, from leads to likes. But not our impact.

Until now, it's been nearly impossible to measure whether an event performs well in terms of sustainability.

Is 10 tonnes of CO₂e* okay or a red flag?

No industry-wide references. No clear benchmarks. → Instead, we've had vague impressions, and good intentions. Meanwhile, most decisions still come down to price, visibility or creativity.

Impact? Still an afterthought, often left out of briefs, calls, and client conversations.

And yet, events are heavy hitters.

10%

of global CO₂e emissions come from events (*source*: *Nature*), not to mention food waste, single-use materials, and unnecessary overproduction.





Regulations are catching up. It's time to act.

In Brussels, single-use plastics are banned. Biodiversity criteria are part of the rules.

Across Europe, the shift is accelerating, and regulations are catching up.

It's not optional anymore. It's time to get ready.

With the new <u>Corporate Sustainability Reporting</u>
<u>Directive (CSRD)</u>, large companies aren't just encouraged to measure their impact anymore.
They're required to.

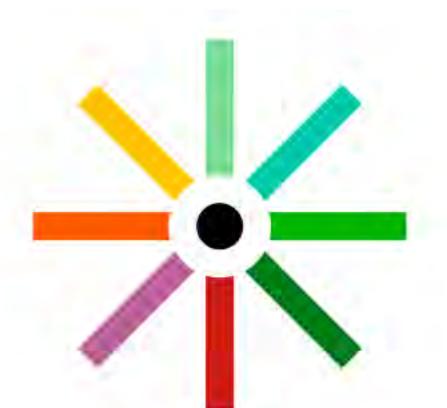


And that accountability extends all the way down the value chain. Events included. From now on, organisers are expected to:

01 Measure the impact of their activities

Demonstrate their efforts to reduce it





It isn't just about numbers. It's more than that.

It's about helping the event industry move with clarity, confidence and shared priorities.

When you don't know where you stand, it's hard to improve. This report changes that.

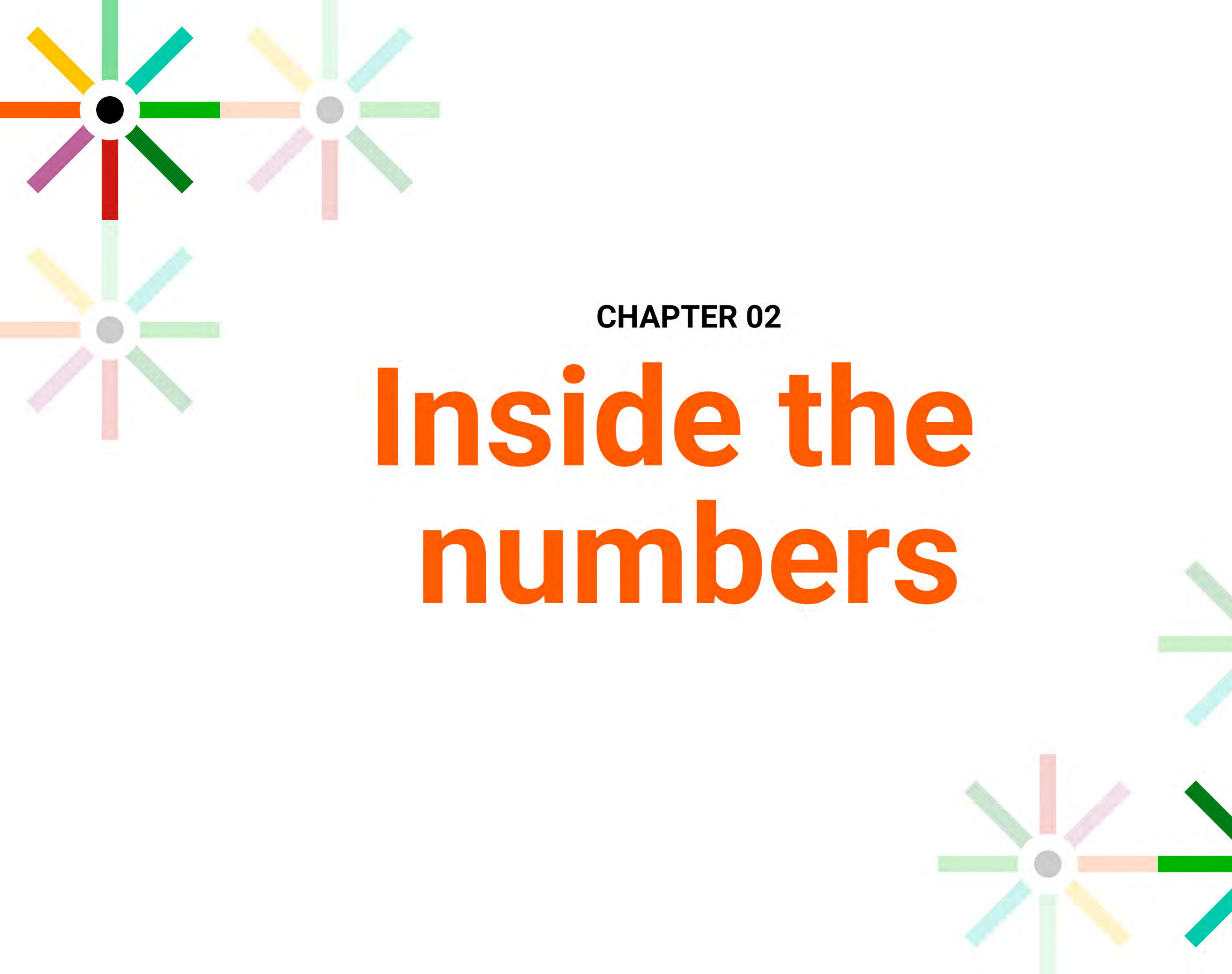
→ Because the more we measure, the faster we move... together. This benchmark isn't just a snapshot, it's meant to be used. It helps to:

O1 Compare your results with sector averages to track progress.

O2 Spot the most impactful categories and act where it matters.

Use concrete data to set goals and guide decisions, from pitch to production.

O4 Bring credibility to your conversations with clients, partners or internal teams, using concrete, sector-based data.







Since 2021, 489 events have been analysed using My Impact Tool.

This benchmark focuses specifically on 226 events* organised in 2024, all of which met our inclusion criteria.

These events took place across 15 countries, mostly in Europe.

Unsurprisingly, the Benelux region dominates. It reflects our early commercial focus and strong local network.

→ But the horizon is expanding. 2025 marks the start of our broader European rollout.

Events	Country	Events	Country
181	Belgium	66	Luxembour
1	Bulgaria	12	Netherland
1	Estonia	2	Poland
4	France	2	Portugal
3	Germany	3	Spain
1	Hungary	1	UK
4	Italy	1	USA
1	Lithuania		



What kinds of events are we talking about?

14 event categories analysed, from corporate parties to workshops.

NB Events	Event type
67	Conference/Workshop
34	Staff Party
29	Team Building
22	Sport
14	Award/Gala
9	Trade Show
6	Anniversary
6	Exhibition

NB Events	Event type
6	Public Event
6	Open Door
5	Convention
5	PR Event
2	Incentive
1	Product Launch
14	Other

82%
of the dataset comes from event agencies, reflecting the profile of our user base.
We'll zoom in on key categories later.



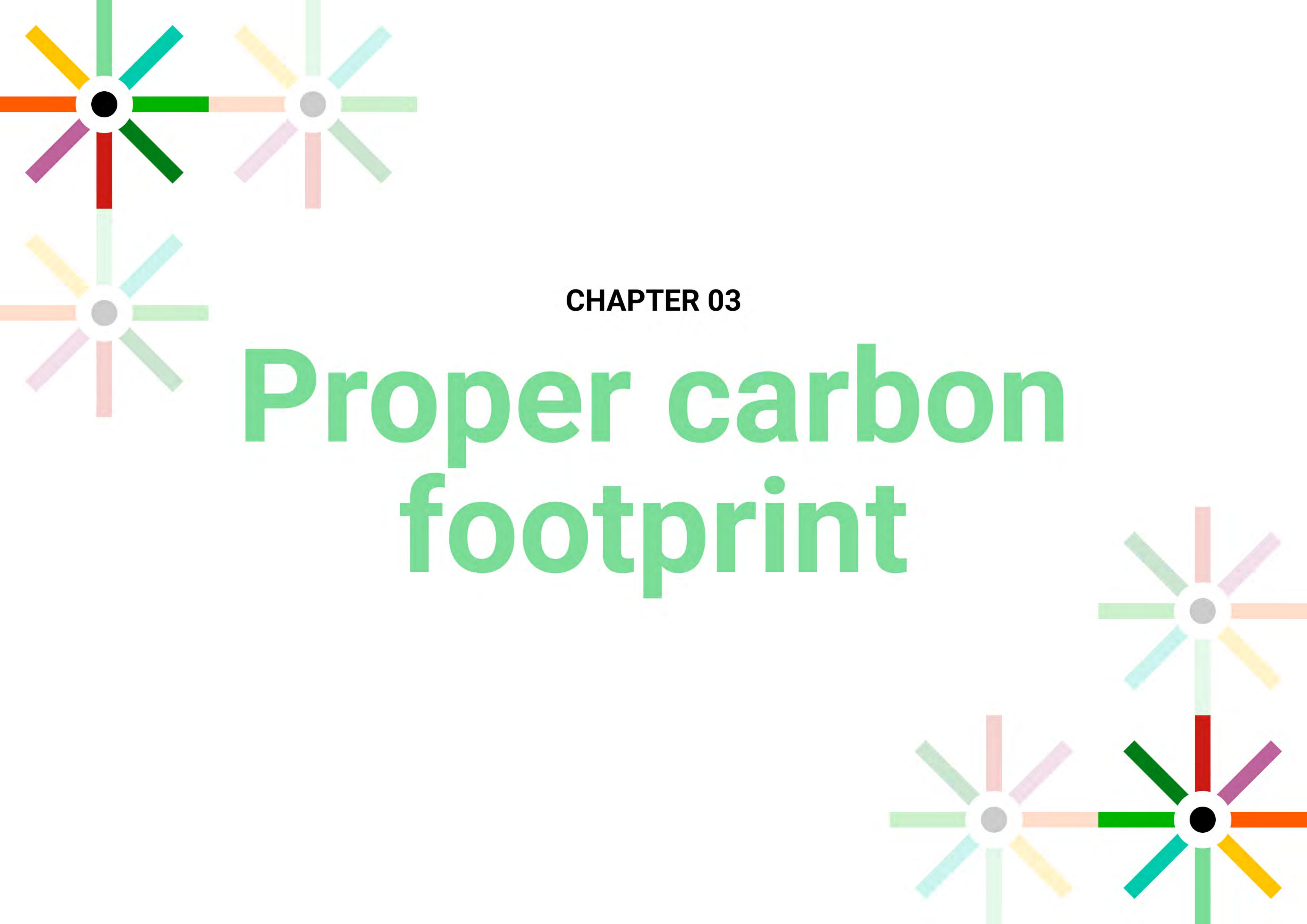
One benchmark, 475,012 participants

This is how many people came together across the 226 events analysed.

A balanced sample, in size, type and geographical reach, allowing for relevant insights across formats.

Most of the events were in-person, which remains the core focus of this edition.

Share of event so	cope in the sample:
local events	national events
14%	27%
regional events	international events
38%	20%







In this benchmark we focus on CO₂e per participant not total emissions per event.

→ Why? Because size matters. A large, well-organised event may emit more in total, but much less per person.

Normalising the data gives us a fairer, more actionable view, and helps you compare, improve and explain your performance.

Scope	NB events	Average total participants	Average total TCO₂e	Average kgCO₂e/pp
Local (0-15 km)	31	974	36	26,1
Regional (15-100 km)	87	679	13	25,5
National	62	5260	31	32,5
International	46	1355	80	139,5



International events, bigger impact?

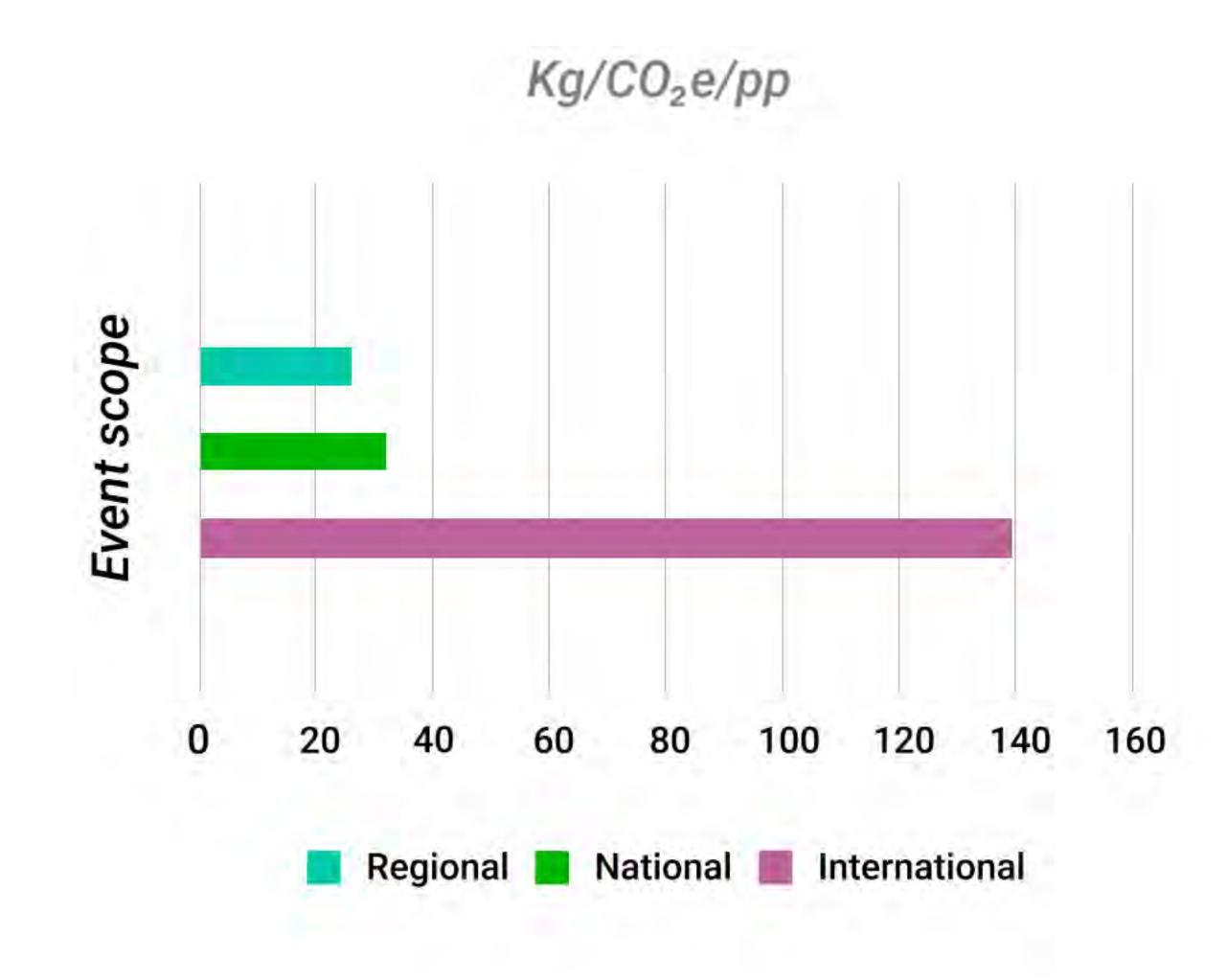
It's not just the event. It's how far people travel to get there.

5X
more CO₂e for international events than for local ones.

20% of events generate 47% of emissions. → The reason? Travel.

It remains the biggest driver of impact, especially when crossing borders.

And since travel is often beyond the organiser's direct control, it makes early planning and clear mobility strategies even more crucial.







Which types of events leave the heaviest footprint?

Here's the average footprint per event type in kgCO₂e per participant, per day:

kgCO₂e per participant	Event type	kgCO₂e per participant	Event type	kgCO ₂ e per participant	Event type
129,6	Award/Gala	51,5	Anniversary	29,6	Staff party
77,1	Workshop/conference	48,3	Open Door	16,6	Team building
69,4	PR event	32,9	Convention	8,9	Public event
66,5	Trade show	31,8	Exhibition	4,5	Sport



Reality check: where we stand vs. where we should be

To stay aligned with the Paris Agreement, we should aim for a carbon budget of:



→ Right now?

Even the "lighter" events in our benchmark exceed that target, sometimes by a factor of 10, 50... or 120.

Conventions and incentive trips are by far the most carbon-intensive formats.



Main sources of impact

Across almost every format, what's driving event emissions the most?

01

Mobility

It's averaging 50% of the total footprint, and up to 70% for international events.

Even if it's partly beyond your control, better planning and clearer coordination with attendees can make a real difference.

Travel-heavy event types:

Trade

shows

97% f emissions

Incentives & sport events

78% of emissions

64%

Workshops & conferences 02

Technical production

On average, 34% of the total footprint comes from everything you build or rent (staging, AV, signage, furniture...)

Resource-heavy event types:

72% of emissions

Conventions

65%

Product launches

60% of emissions

Corporate Anniversaries



Main sources of impact

Across almost every format, what's driving event emissions the most?

Average event impact per format in kgCO₂e / person:

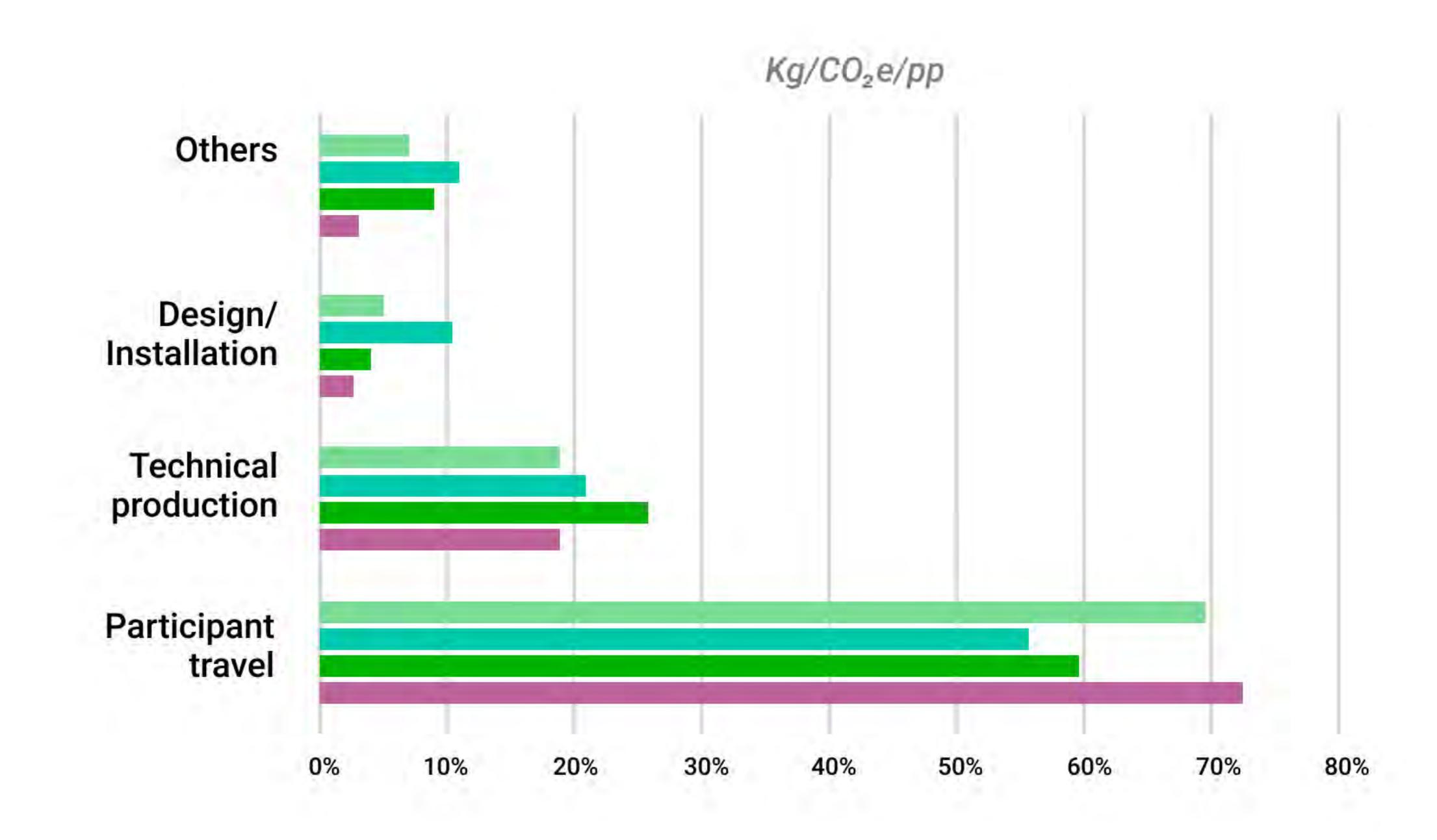
local re

ocal regional 25.5

national internationa

2,5

- → Regional events have almost the same impact as local ones.
- → International events impact is 5x higher than local ones.







Some types of events are consistently heavier than others.

→ On next slides are a few highlights from our analysis, showing how impact can vary by format:

01 Staff parties

02 Conferences/Workshops

03 Awards/Gala

04 Trade shows

05 Team buildings

06 Sports events

Keep in mind that each average hides a wide range, from ultra-light formats to carbon-heavy giants.

But averages don't tell the whole story.

Two events in the same category can have radically different footprints, depending on the number of attendees, travel distances, venue choices, food, and technical setup.

That's why it's so important to look beyond the global score and understand what's really driving your impact.



Event-by-event breakdown (1/6)

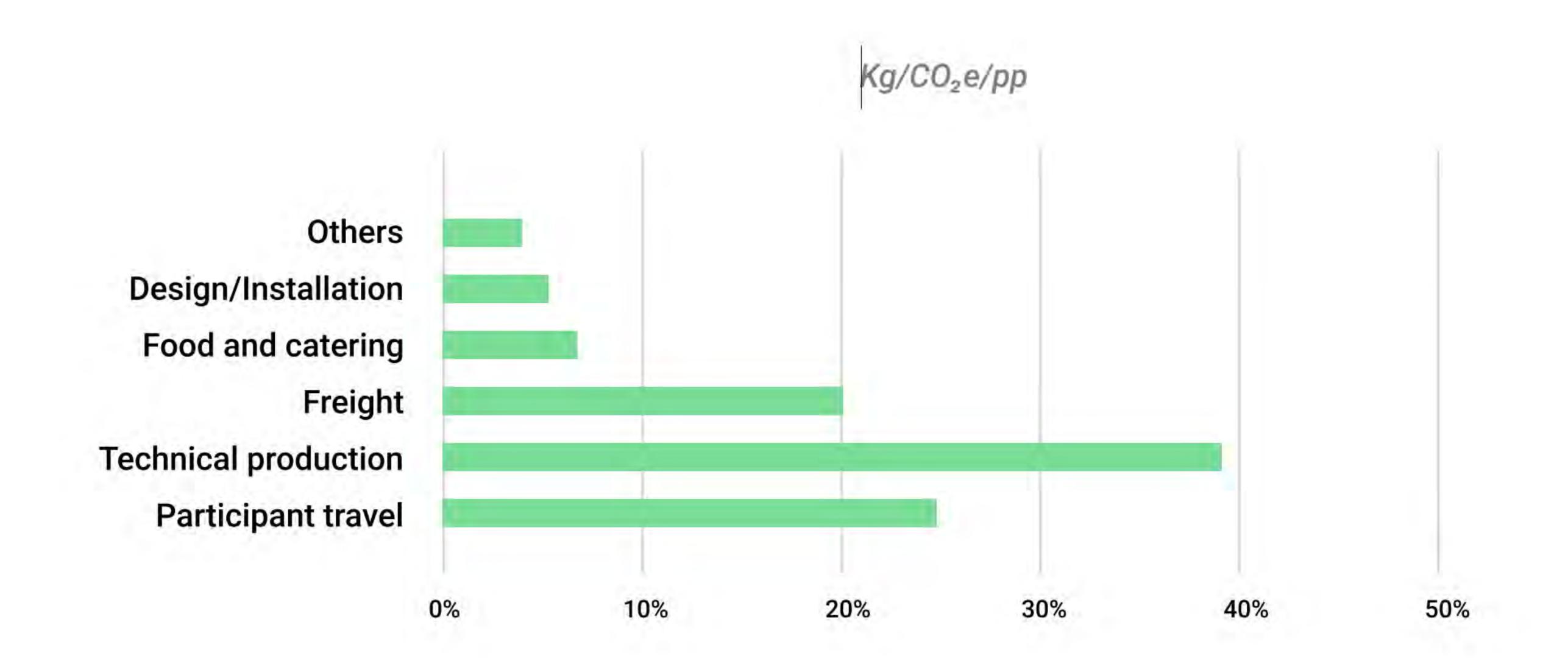
Which event types leave the biggest footprint? Focus on staff parties:

Copy average kgCope Number of files: 34
Main range of events:

On 21 29,6 143

Main range of events:

On Regional
On National

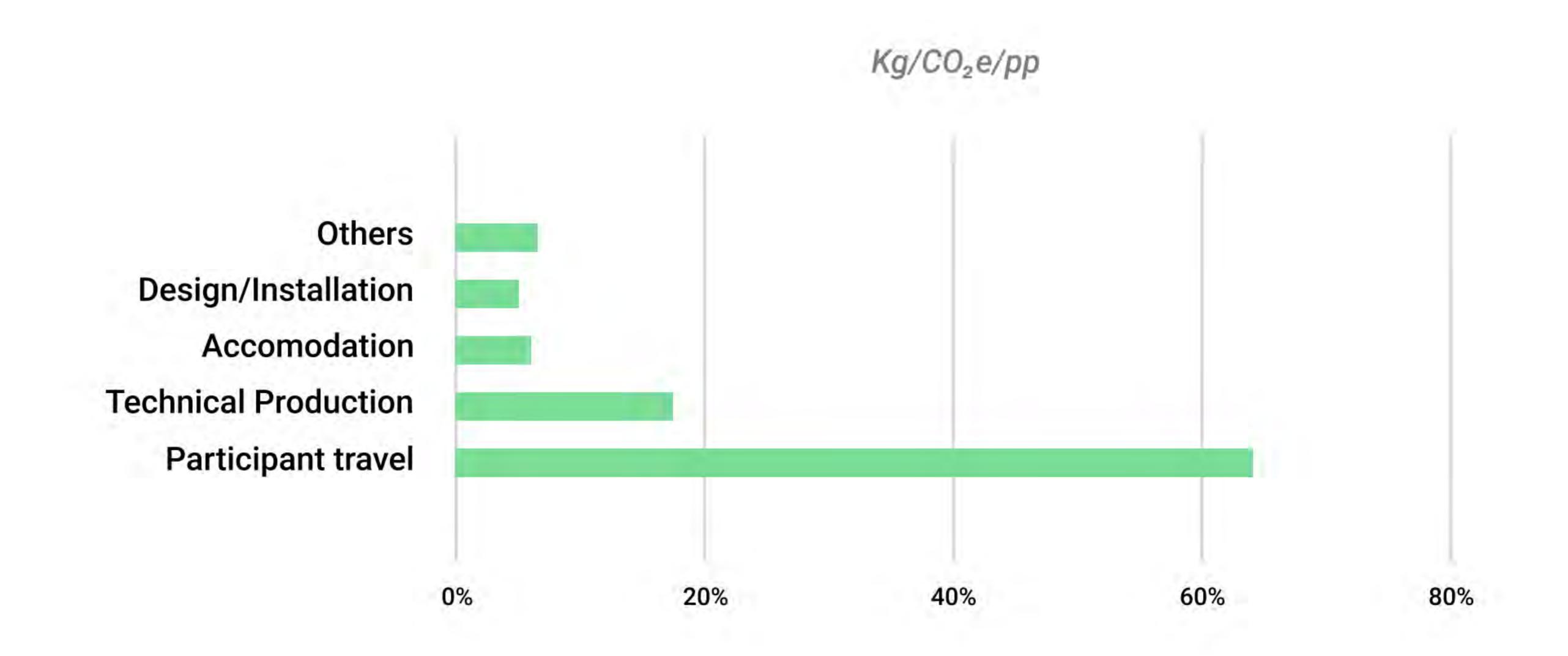




Event-by-event breakdown (2/6)

Which event types leave the biggest footprint? Focus on conferences/workshops:

O,14
minimum
kgCO₂e
Number of files: 67
Main range of events:
01 International





Event-by-event breakdown (3/6)

Which event types leave the biggest footprint? Focus on awards/gala:

Emission per participant per day:

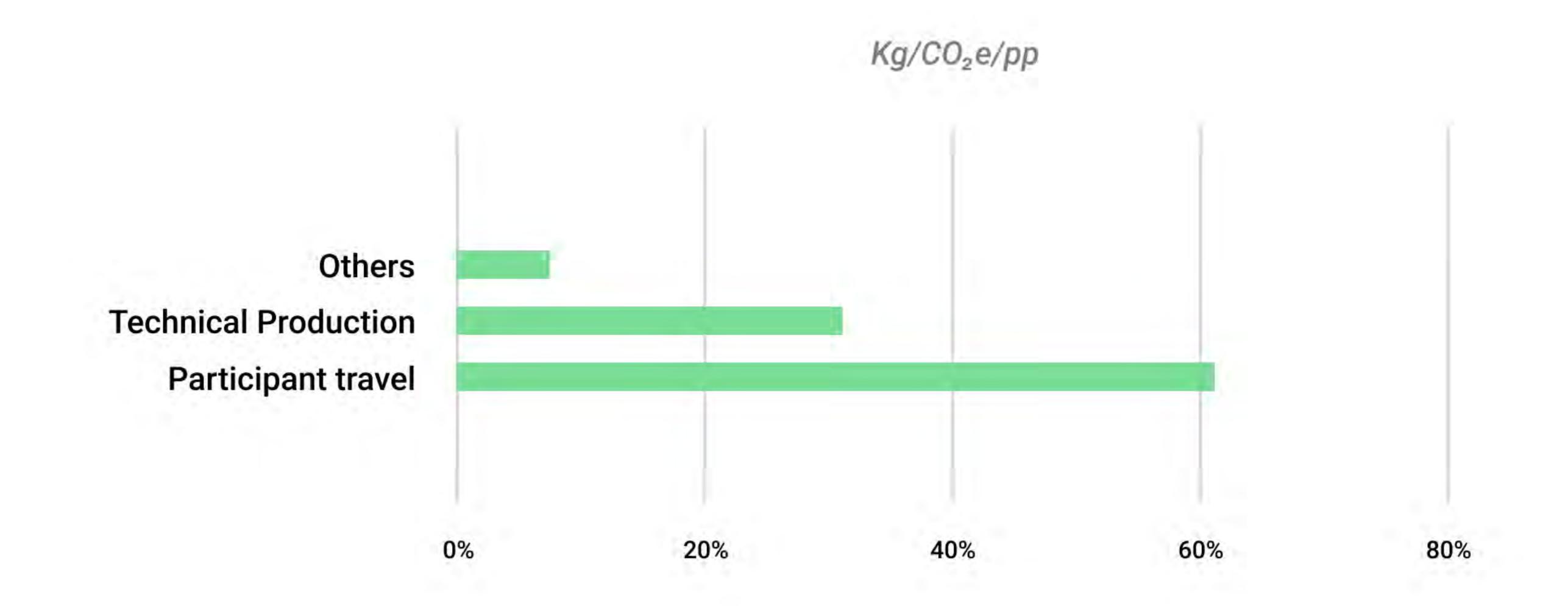
15 129,6 380

minimum kgCO2e kgCO2e maximum kgCO2e

Number of files: 14

Main range of events:

01 National
02 International





Event-by-event breakdown (4/6)

Which event types leave the biggest footprint? Focus on trade shows:

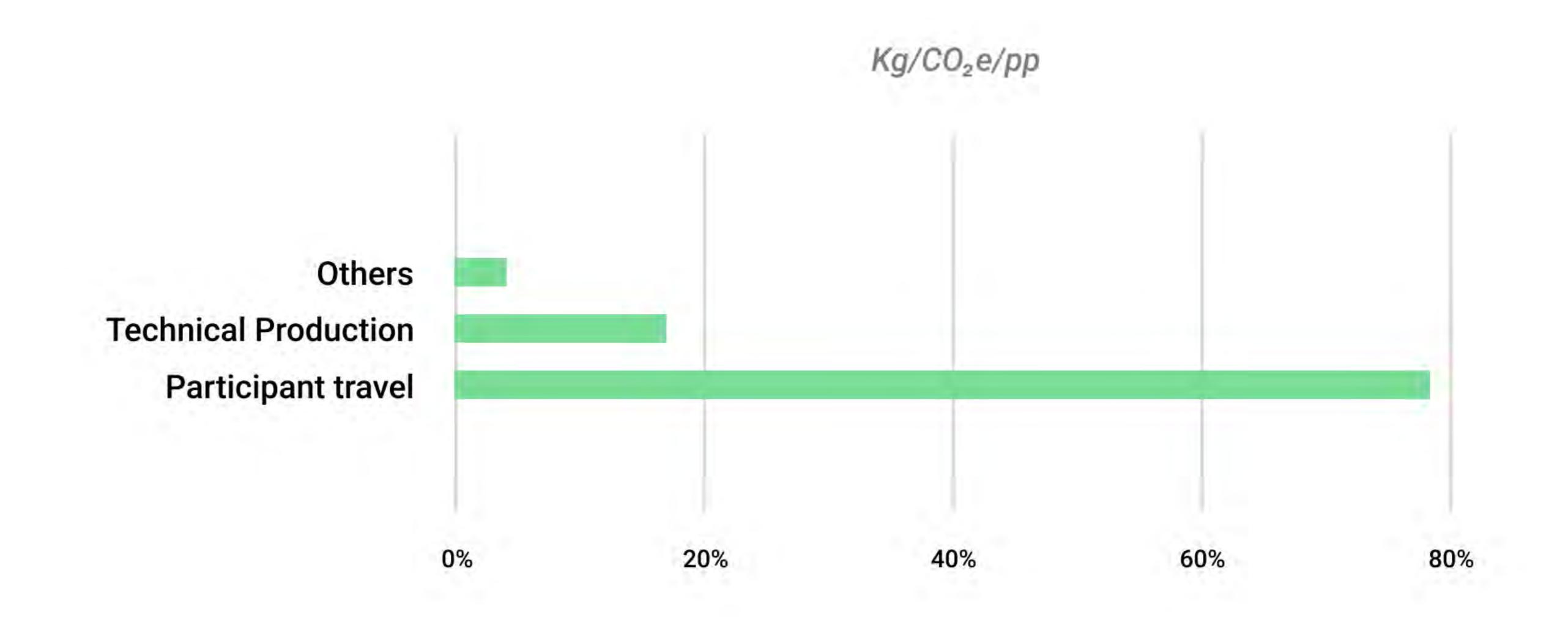
C,85 66,5 359

minimum kgCO₂e average kgCO₂e maximum kgCO₂e

Number of files: 9

Main range of events:

01 Regional
02 International





Event-by-event breakdown (5/6)

Which event types leave the biggest footprint? Focus on team buildings:

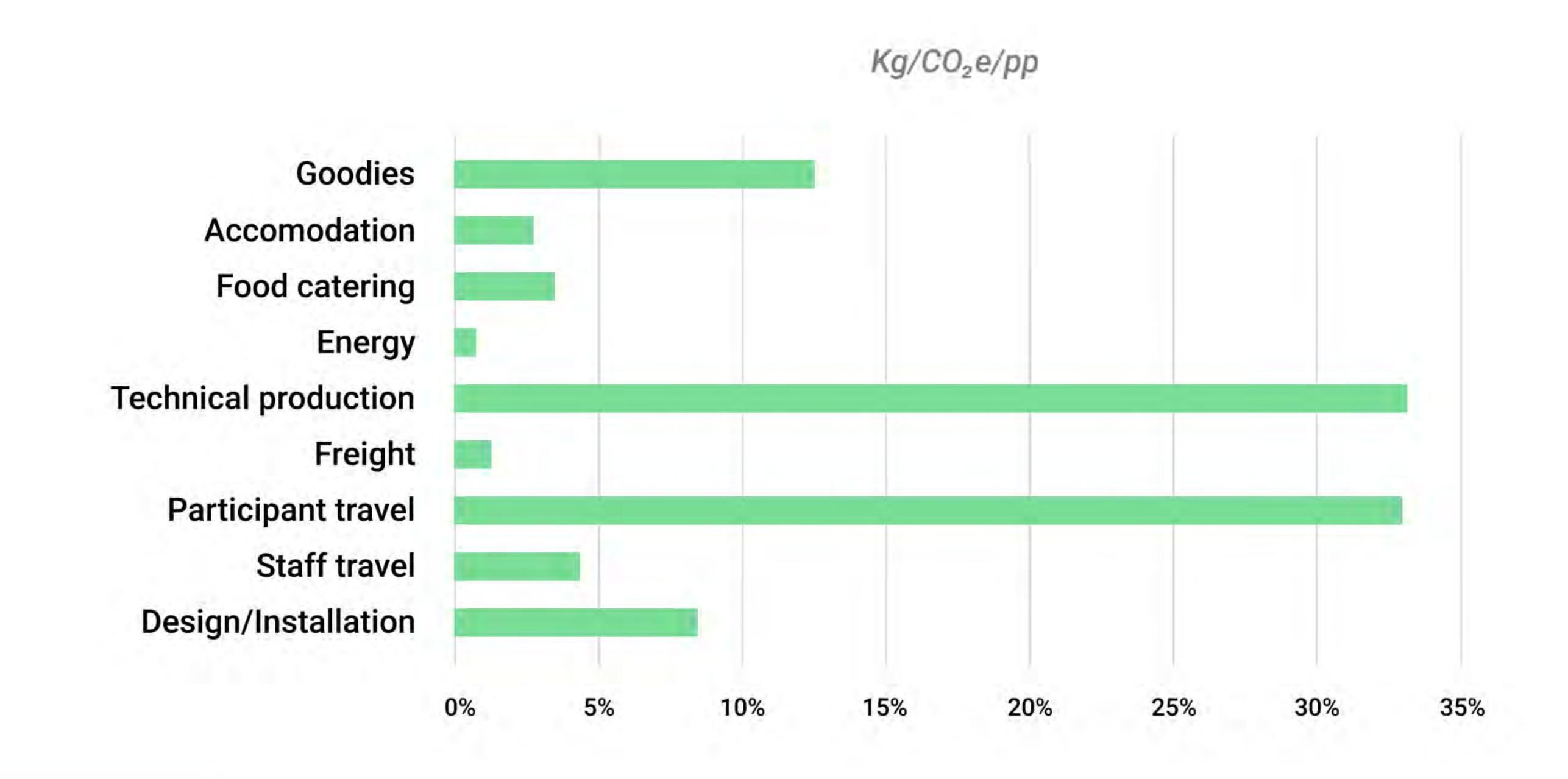
O,44 16,6 66,5

minimum kgCO₂e average kgCO₂e maximum kgCO₂e

Number of files: 29

Main range of events:

01 Regional





Event-by-event breakdown (6/6)

Which event types leave the biggest footprint? Focus on sports events:

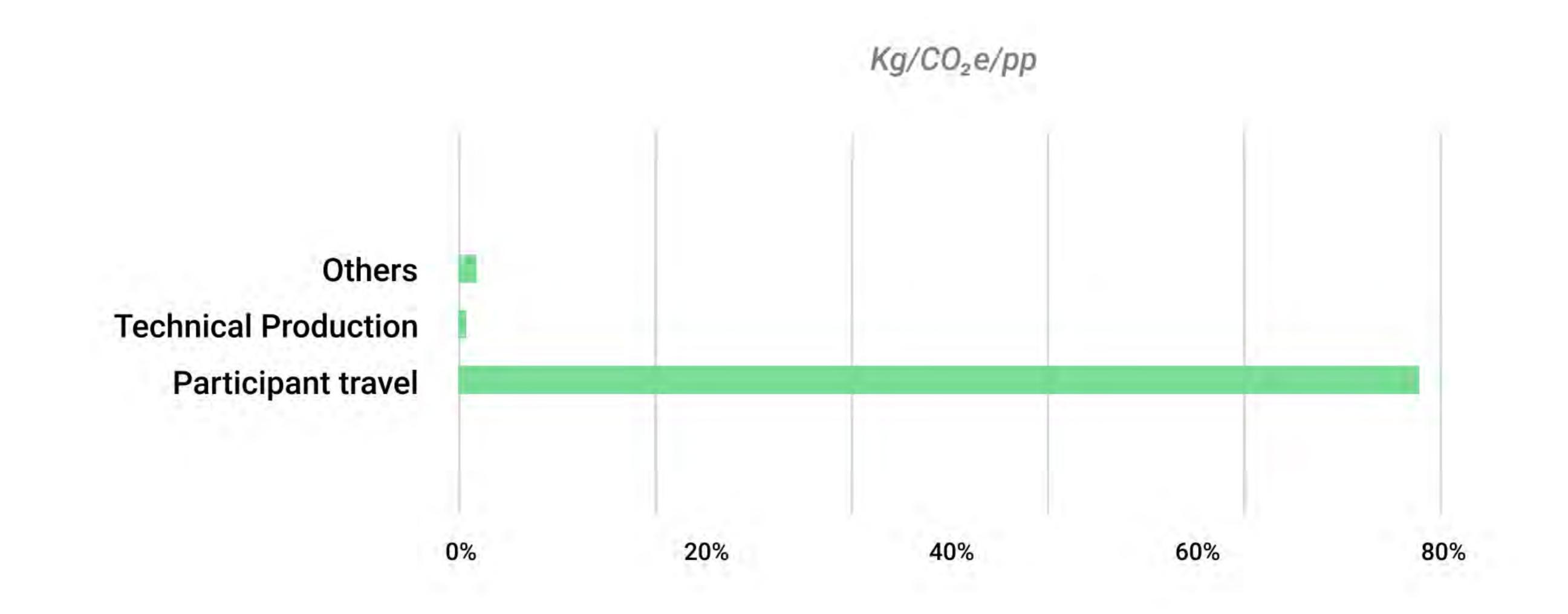
Co. 26 4,5 17,13

minimum kgCo.2e kgCo.2e maximum kgCo.2e

Number of files: 22

Main range of events:

01 National



Where to act first?



In a fast-paced industry, it's crucial to focus on what really moves the needle.

5 high-impact actions to cut emissions.

Not everything needs to change at once and some actions go further than others, but if you're after quick wins with real impact, these 5 areas are the best place to start:



Travel & Mobility

Encourage public transport, choose local suppliers, and optimise delivery routes.



Technical Production

Keep it simple. Limit equipment, avoid overproduction, and pick well-equipped venues.



Signage

Reuse, share and go for non-toxic, low-waste materials.



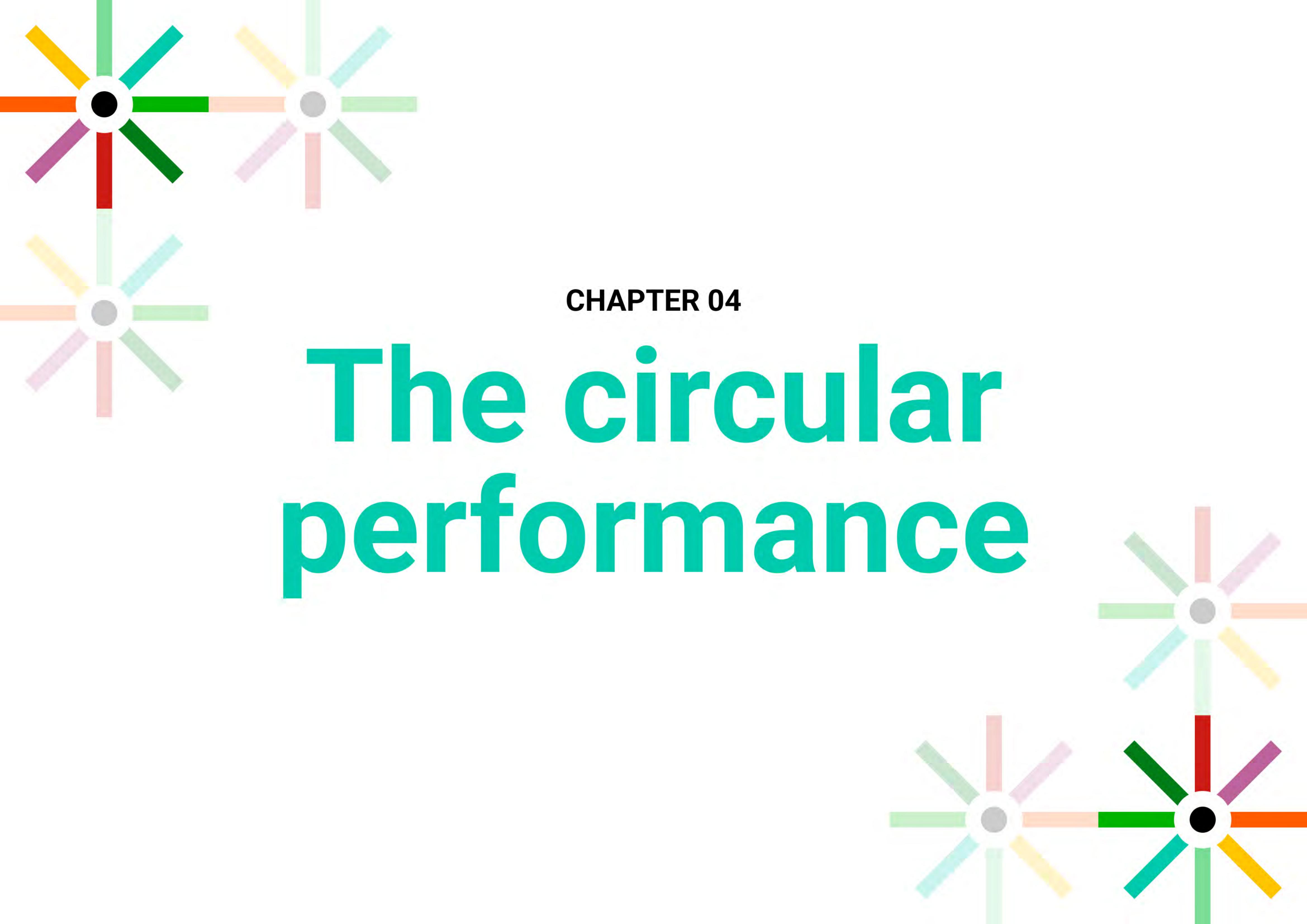
Venue & Accommodation

Choose locations with good infrastructure, energy efficiency, and sustainable operations.



Food & Catering

Go veggie where you can (+80% reduction), and favour seasonal, local produce (+30% reduction).





Sustainability isn't just about emissions

It's about how resources are used, reused or wasted. That's where circularity comes in.

Our benchmark looked at multiple dimensions of circular performance across event types, including catering, giveaways, mobility, signage, venue and waste.

Scores generally ranged from C to B, with few events scoring A, but also very few falling into D or E.

That's encouraging!



Performance scale (A-E) → A = Excellent | B = Good | C = Acceptable | D-E = Needs improvement





What's the circularity score? Focus on catering:

Overall performance is rather positive. Circular practices like reducing meat, sourcing local, and avoiding waste are increasingly adopted.

Across all measured events, an average of 47% of the menu is vegetarian.

The closer this percentage gets to 100%, the more it contributes to improve the catering score.

Shifting towards more plantbased, seasonal, and locally sourced options doesn't just tick boxes, it significantly lowers emissions.

Top 3 performers

- 11 PR events
- 02 Public events
- 03 Gala

Bottom 3 performers

- 01 Open Doors
- 02 Team Buildings
- 03 Exhibitions





What's the circularity score? Focus on giveaways:

The high number of A scores in this category reflects a real shift: fewer events include giveaways, a positive evolution.

In our methodology, offering no giveaways results in an A.

But when gifts are distributed, it becomes much harder to reach A.

→ Why? Because it's hard to meet the full set of ethical and ecological standards (e.g. recyclable materials, fair labor, sustainable sourcing,...).

Product Launches and Trade Shows often land around C, while a B score indicates that some thoughtful choices were made regarding origin, composition, and life cycle. 98% of raw materials are produced outside of Europe*.

Global extraction of raw materials has tripled between 1970 and 2017 from 27 to 92 billion tonnes*.





What's the circularity score? Focus on mobility, signage, venue:

Mobility remains one of the toughest categories to address.

The choices made around transport (audience, suppliers, staff) have a massive impact, but are not always in the organiser's hands.

When international travel is involved, scores always drop.

Venues often lack dedicated sustainability policies/infrastructure.

Truly circular ones, managing both energy and material flows, remain rare. Interestingly, public events in urban spaces tend to perform better (B or even A), thanks to integrated solutions like public transport, energy efficiency, and waste systems.

Signage is still a weak spot while organisers are starting to choose better materials, avoid PVC or solvent-based printing, reuse remains rare, even for events with recurring branding needs,...

→ One exception? Incentive events, which often require little to no signage and score higher as a result.





What's the circularity score? Focus on waste:

Despite the challenges, waste management scores relatively well, with an average B.

→ This generally reflects the presence of a sorting system and visible good intentions.

But from experience, implementation rarely lives up to ambition.

Recycling often lacks proper infrastructure, and available data is often inconsistent or even nonexistent and unplanned waste appears regularly, from suppliers, guests or on-site teams.

The most effective approach? Prevent waste altogether*



2,12 billion tons** of waste produced each year globally.



1,72 earths to absorb that waste.



99% of what we purchase is trashed within a year.





Sustainable Development Goals

Top 4 of the most frequently addressed SDGs in events using My Impact Tool.



SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Through inclusive programming, accessible venues, diverse speakers, staff and audience.



SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

By activating public spaces responsibly, collaborating with local stakeholders, and encouraging public or soft mobility for attendees.



SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

By optimising circular practices at every stage from sourcing to reuse and waste prevention, particularly across high-impact areas like catering, signage and materials.



SDG 13: Climate Action

By measuring footprints, reducing emissions and raising awareness.





Designed with intent, events go beyond harm reduction, they become drivers of positive change.

To contribute to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, you can adopt a more structured and strategic approach:

Integrate the SDGs early in the event design process. Don't retrofit, build sustainability into the brief, the supplier criteria, and the KPIs from the start.

Move beyond measurement to action. Act with a credible reduction plan and offset residual emissions via certified projects with cobenefits. Compensation isn't a way out, it's a way forward when combined with measurable reduction efforts.

Create partnerships that drive systemic change, by working with NGOs, local governments, and mission-driven companies aligned with the SDGs.

→ They help extend impact beyond the event and build momentum for 2030.







Events can disrupt entire ecosystems, both visibly and invisibly.

Biodiversity still receives limited attention in event planning, even though it directly provides most of the resources we rely on.

Its degradation would have immediate consequences for the event industry. Events don't just leave a footprint, in ways that often go unnoticed in traditional reporting. They can disrupt entire ecosystems, both visibly and invisibly.

→ It's time to assess and reduce the pressure we place on nature, on site and across the supply chain.

On next slides find:

01 Where, when and how

02 What we found

03 What we measure

04 How to improve







Outdoor events present a higher risk of disturbing ecosystems, especially when they're held in or near natural areas such as parks, forests, wetlands or coastal zones.

In contrast, indoor or urban events tend to have fewer direct effects on biodiversity.



Indoor events can contribute to biodiversity loss upstream, through the extraction, transport and production of materials, furniture, food, and energy used behind the scenes.

"Urban" doesn't mean "impact-free".



What we found? (2/4)

Our biodiversity score is based on 4 key drivers of biodiversity loss, shaped by specific event choices:

- O1 Pollution: from soil, water, light or sound, especially harmful in sensitive zones..
- O2 Habitat destruction: caused by infrastructure, foot traffic or installations in nature.

- Overexploitation of resources: through the quantity and type of food, decor or materials consumed.
- O4 Contribution to climate change: via energy use, travel and emissions.



What we measure? (3/4)

Overall, biodiversity scores in our 2024 dataset are relatively good.

70 100 average score Top performer: Public event

+2 points above average on the My Impact Tool scale. Held far from sensitive ecosystems, they're less likely to disturb biodiversity.

30 100 average score

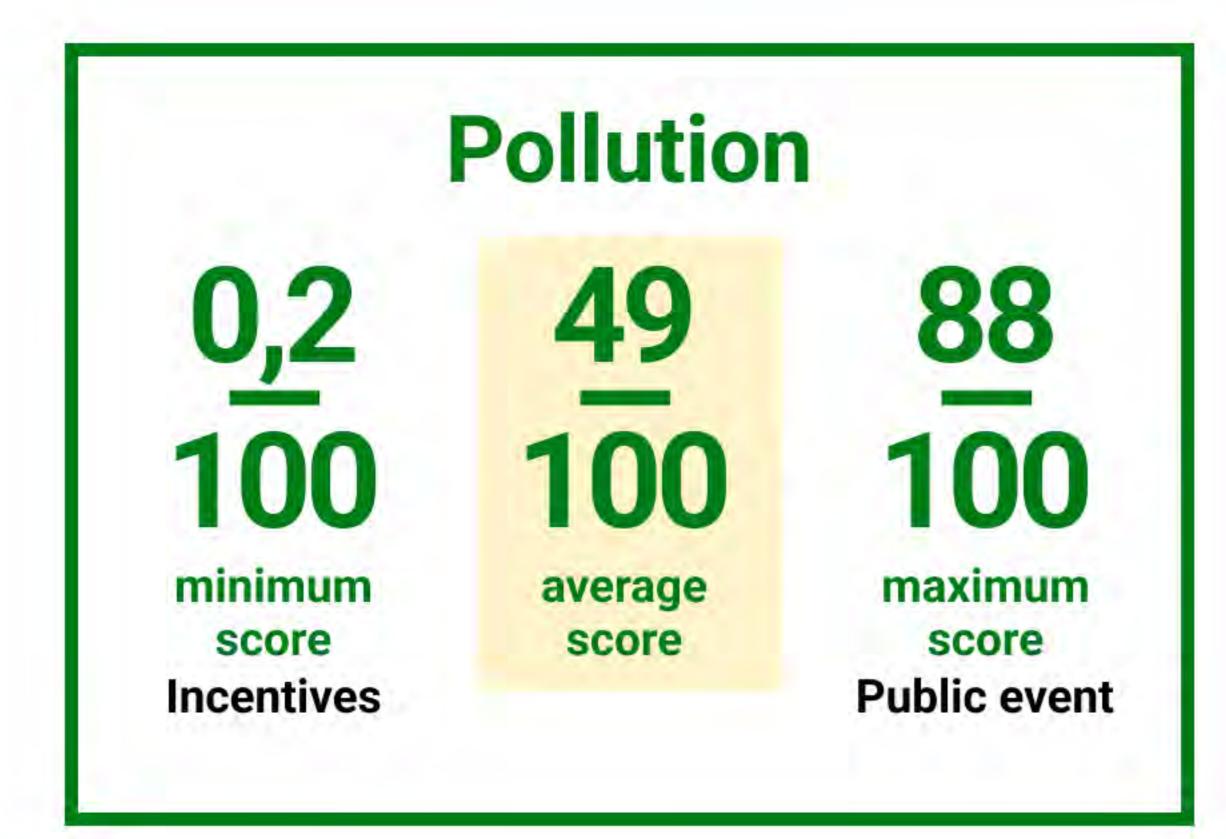
Bottom performer : Incentive

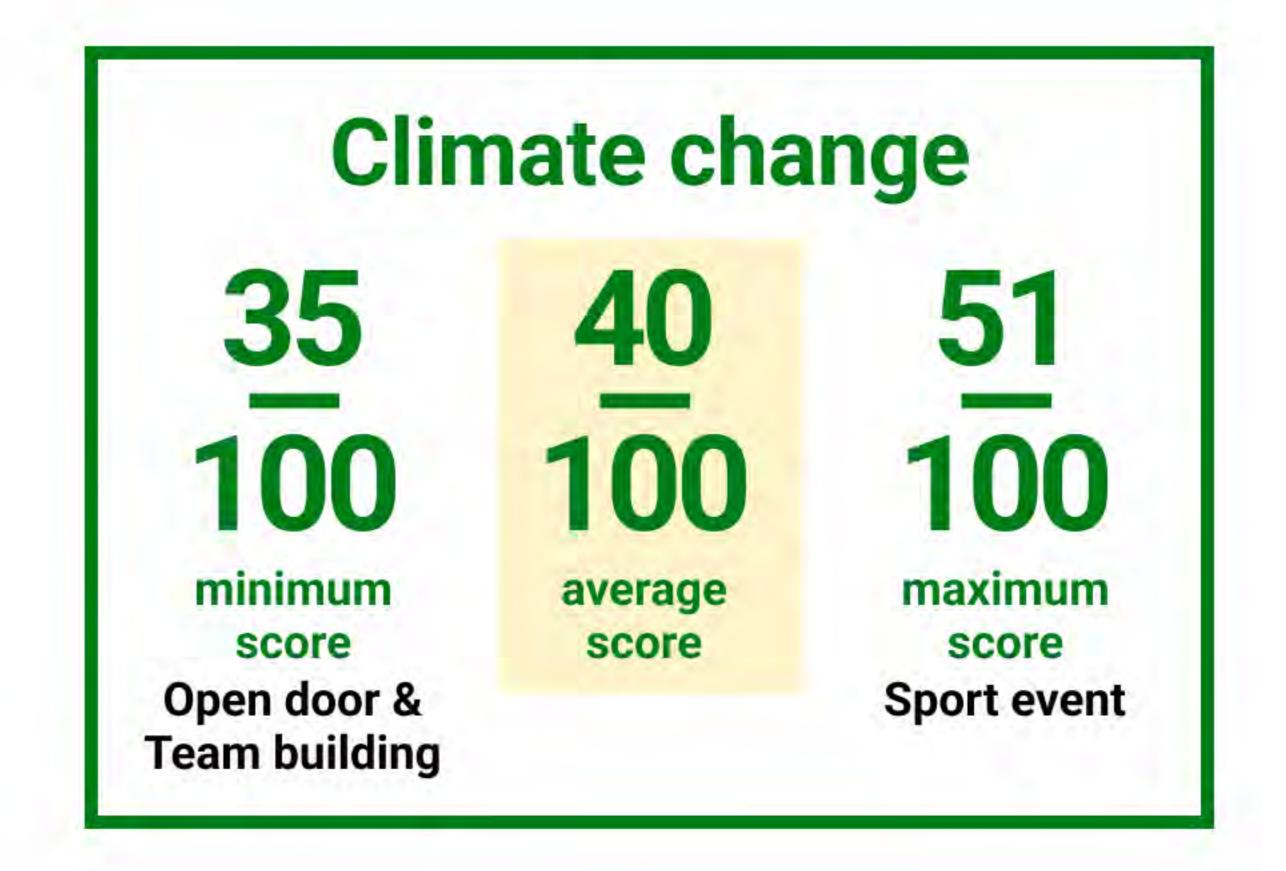
-2 points above average on the My Impact Tool scale. Often held abroad, these events tend to have a lower score due to their greater proximity to sensitive ecosystems

→ Incentive events often involve air travel and take participants to natural or remote areas. Depending on the activities and how they're managed, the impact on biodiversity can be significant. This doesn't mean incentives can't be sustainable, but it does mean they require more thoughtful planning to minimize their footprint.

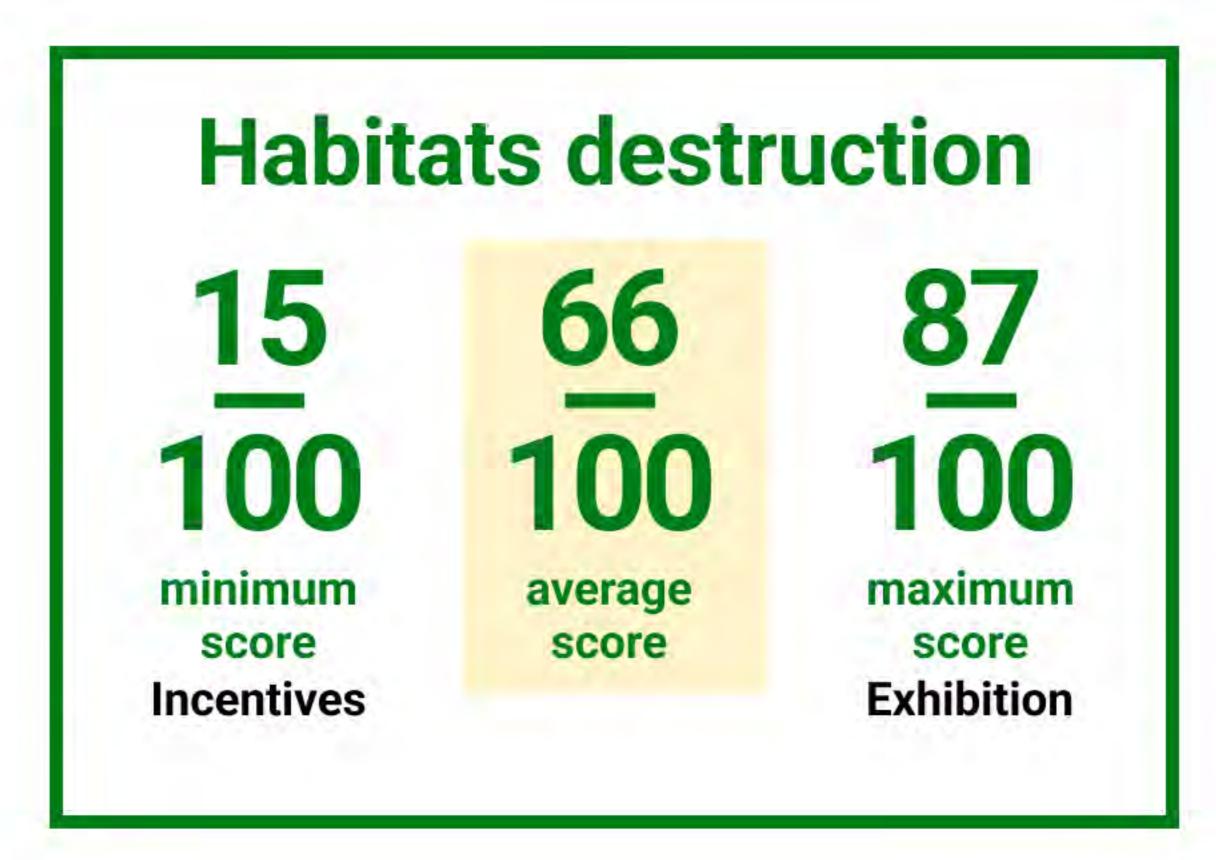
It's mainly because most events were held in indoor or urban settings. But there are some clear differences by event format:















Actions that reduce emissions or improve circularity often also benefit biodiversity.

But some practices target biodiversity protection more directly. Here are a few key examples:

- Food: prioritise organic or sustainably sourced menus (e.g. organic farming, certified fishing,...).
- Water: minimise potable water use to essential needs only.

- Wood and paper: use certified and/or local sources (FSC, PEFC) to support forest ecosystems.
- Plastics: replace with biodegradable alternatives that fully decompose.
- Minimise disturbance to wildlife: first, direct lights away from sensitive areas (e.g. forests, wetlands).

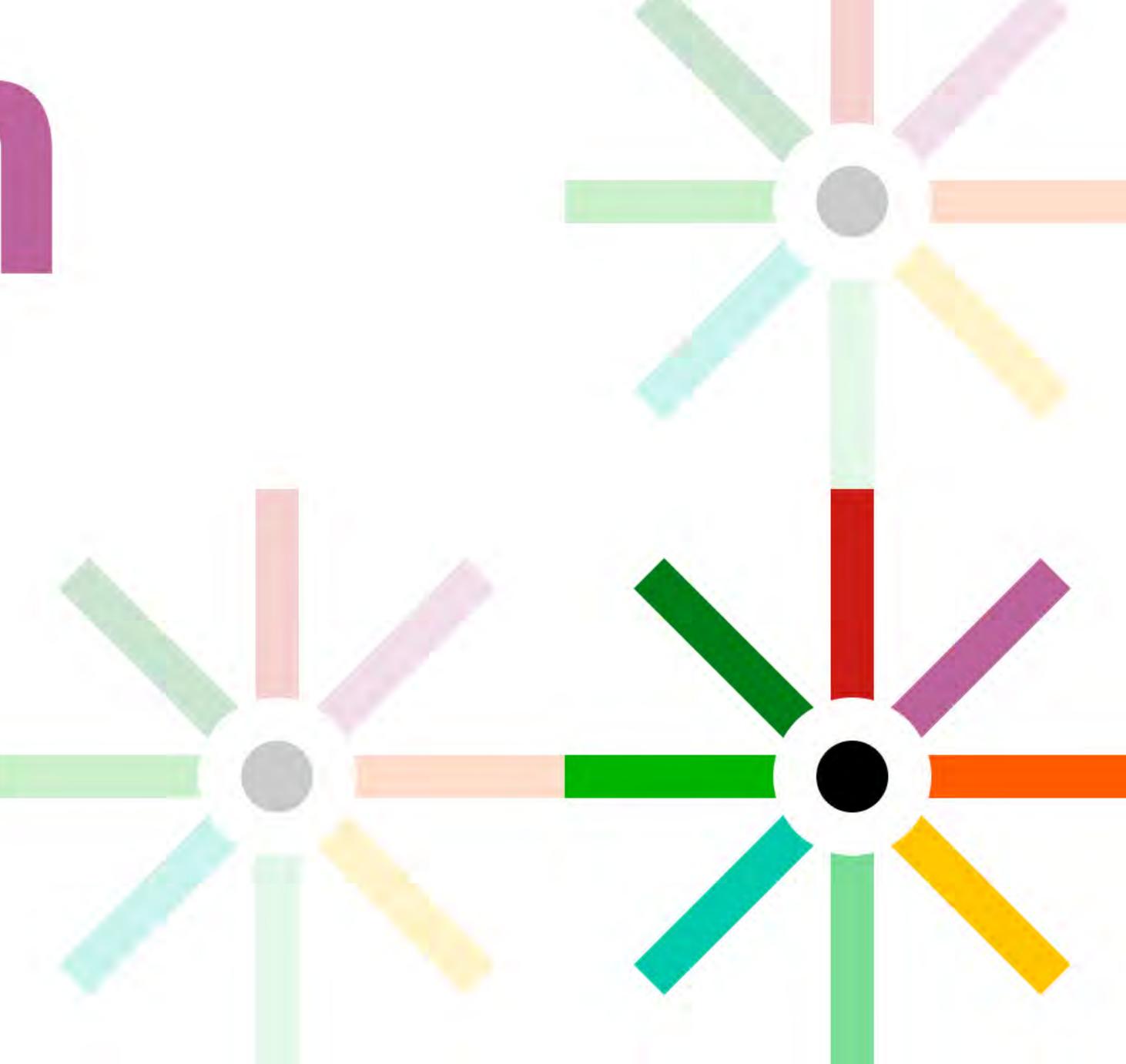
Also use physical barriers or natural structures (e.g. trees, screens, walls) to contain sound within the activity zone and prevent it from spreading.

- Avoid chemical toilets:
 dry or organic systems reduce
 pollution and microplastics
- → When planned intentionally, events can help protect the ecosystems they depend on.



CHAPTER 07

Last but not least: inclusion





From checklists to purposeful action

Inclusion isn't a box to tick, it's a mindset to adopt.

Unlike carbon or circularity, inclusion is harder to measure with numbers. That's why My Impact Tool uses a qualitative framework, combining two perspectives.

→ This framework isn't about perfection. It's about progress. It's built to raise awareness, guide reflection, and support more intentional decisions. O1 Action-based evaluation: are there tangible measures in place to make the experience more inclusive?

Audience needs assessment: have the relevant needs of underrepresented groups been actively considered?





Inclusion scores across our 2024 dataset are encouraging.

All event types scored above:

60/100

The overall average scored:

77/100

→ But one insight stands out: panel diversity remains one of the lowest-scoring goals, present in just 37% of events.

This reveals a persistent industry challenge. Speaker diversity doesn't just signal inclusion, it makes content richer and more relevant to more people.

Top scoring format?

Product launches (88%) where participant experience and brand image tend to drive higher standards.

Lowest performers?

Exhibitions and award or gala events (61%) pointing to areas with more room for improvement.





Inclusion scores across our 2024 dataset are encouraging.

Here's how often the 9 inclusion goals tracked by My Impact Tool were achieved in 2024:



37% 01 Panel Diversity



66% Catering



72% 07 LGBTQIA+
Friendly
Friendly



51% 02 Staff
Diversification

Diversification



92% 5 ACCESSIBLE for All



08 Inclusion of Digital Divided Communities

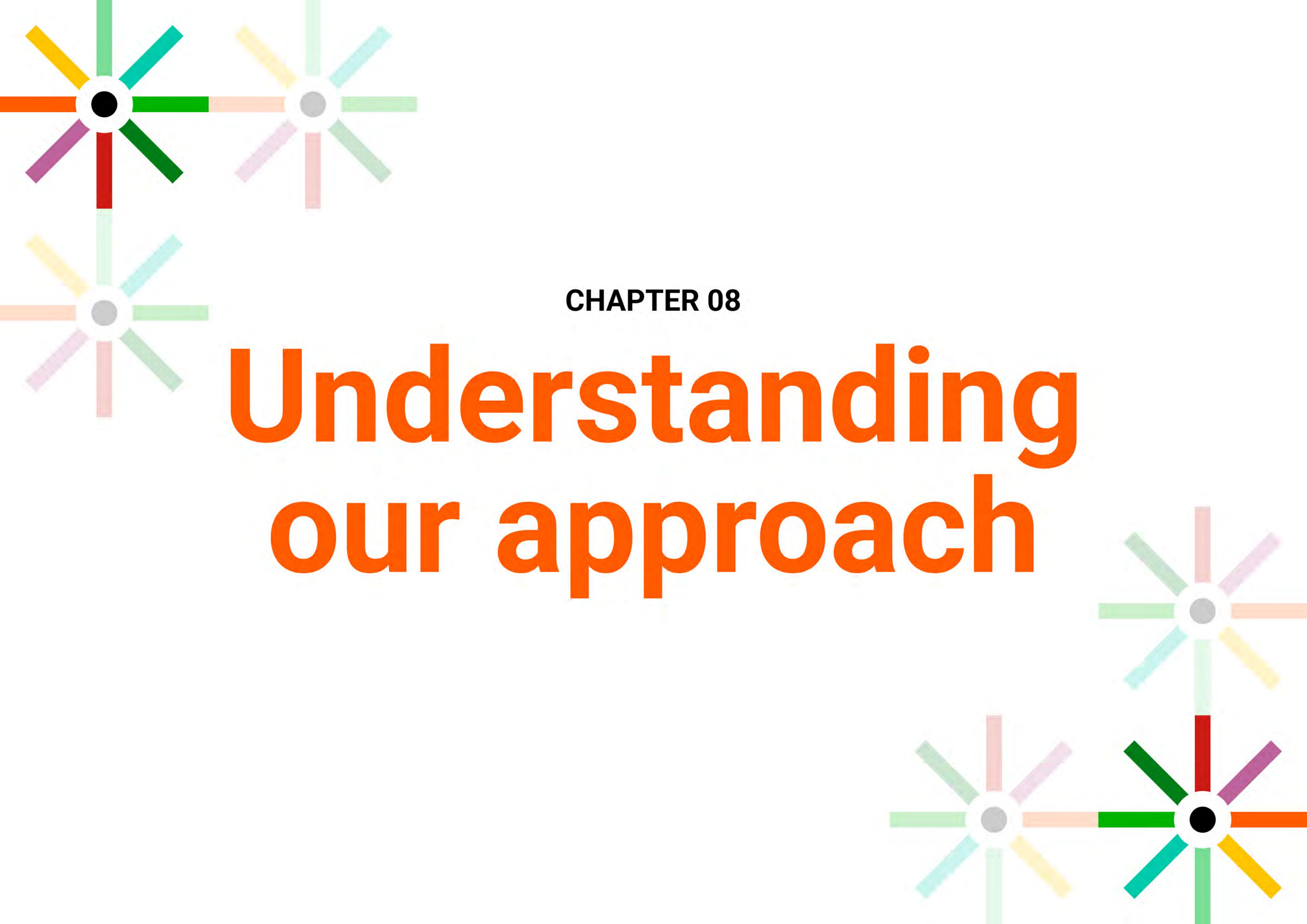


03 Inclusive Communicants





09 Quiet Spaces







A smarter way to measure what matters. Designed by and for the event industry. Built to turn intentions into action.

My Impact Tool is a digital platform that helps professionals understand, improve and prove the impact of their events.

It's designed by and for the event industry, with the ambition to become Europe's leading tool for managing the sustainability of events and communication campaigns. We support the transition with:

- O 1 Strategic guidance to define a realistic path forward.
- Measurement tools tailored to field realities and constraints.
- O3 Structured and comparable data to make faster, better decisions.

Our mission?

Help organisations turn good intentions into measurable progress environmental, social, and economic.

We bring structure, clarity and confidence to your sustainability journey.





We're the team who analysed the data, challenged the patterns and made the numbers speak, for you.



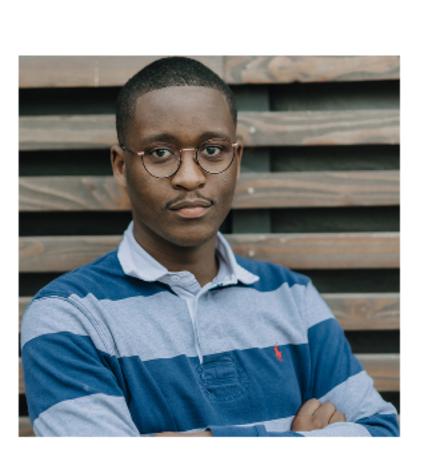
Manon Glauden

Product Owner

at My Impact Tool

Bilan Carbone Certified® Change Management





Pierre Danger Customer Support at My Impact Tool

Bilan Carbone
Certified®
QSE Master
(Quality Security Environment)





Tom Verrept
Business Development
at My Impact Tool

Vlerick Take The Lead in Sustainability
Management



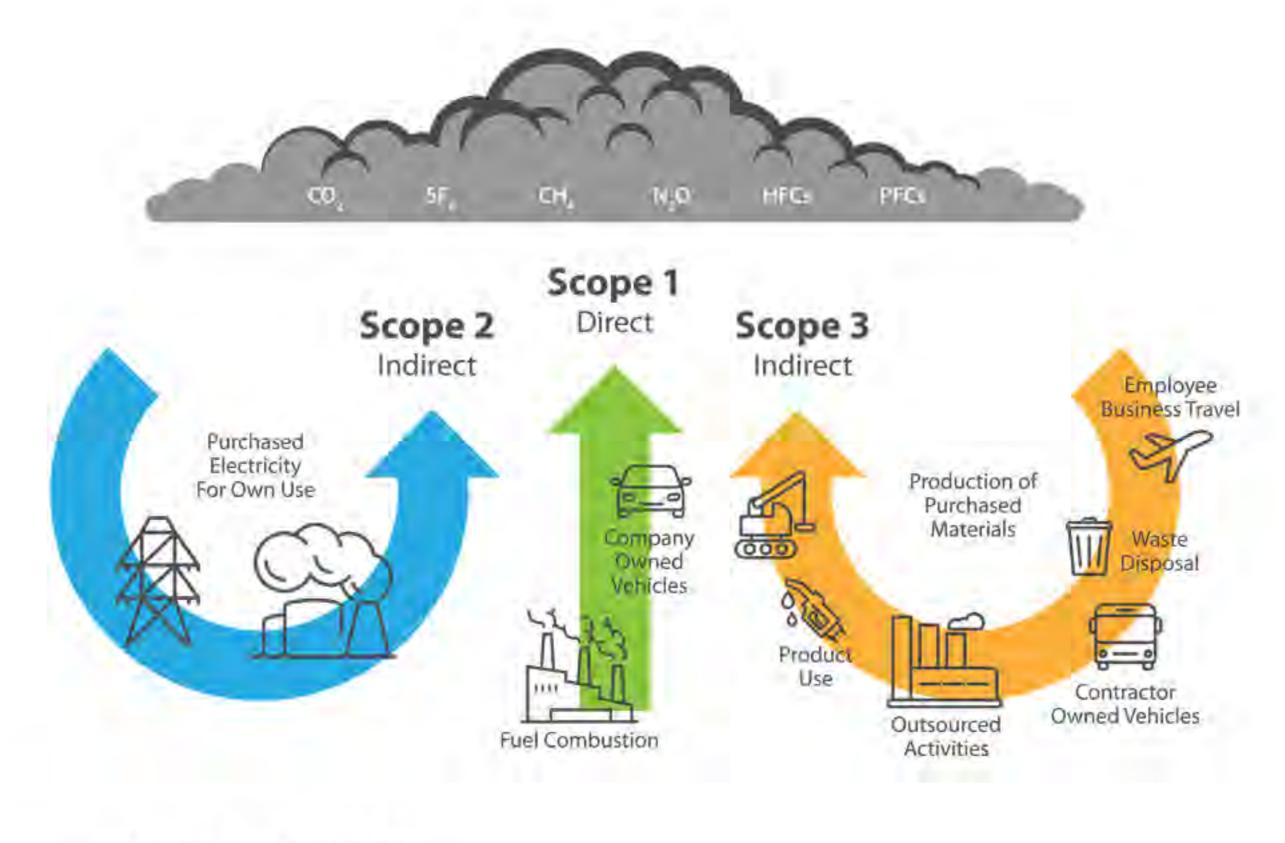




Our methodology follows a rigorous and transparent approach, aligned with the GHG Protocol.

→ Our methodology is fully aligned with the GHG Protocol.

We apply the three scopes of emissions (1, 2 and 3) and regularly update our emission factors, primarily based on the **ADEME database**, a trusted reference in France and Europe.



Source: Apexcos

We place strong emphasis on collecting realistic mobility data (audience, staff, and freight) for every single event.

When exact figures are unavailable, reasonably estimated data is always better than missing data. Plausible assumptions allow for more accurate benchmarking and better decision-making.





Sustainability doesn't stop at CO₂e. It's bigger than that.

Of course, carbon footprint matters, but it's only part of the story. True sustainability goes beyond emissions: it's about people, resources, and systemic change.

We take a multidimensional approach to event impact. We also collect data on 4 important categories:

- Circular performance
- **Social inclusion**
- **Biodiversity impact**
- Sustainable
 Development
 Goals (SDGs)

A clear, evolving set of indicators, built on the latest best practices and data.

→ Co-designed with European experts, it stays grounded in real-world operations: practical, credible, and always up to date.





We believe in honest data, and that includes being upfront about how it's collected.

Our tool was developed by experts, quality checks are carried out rigorously. But each event report is filled in by the organiser.

In other words, this benchmark is based on selfreported data. That means there's room for human error, interpretation, or incomplete answers.

Still, the trends we're seeing are consistent over time, giving us confidence in their reliability.

We're also refining the grid to make benchmarks even sharper in future editions. → One last thing, our current event typology will be improved in 2025:

Tewer events labelled "Other".

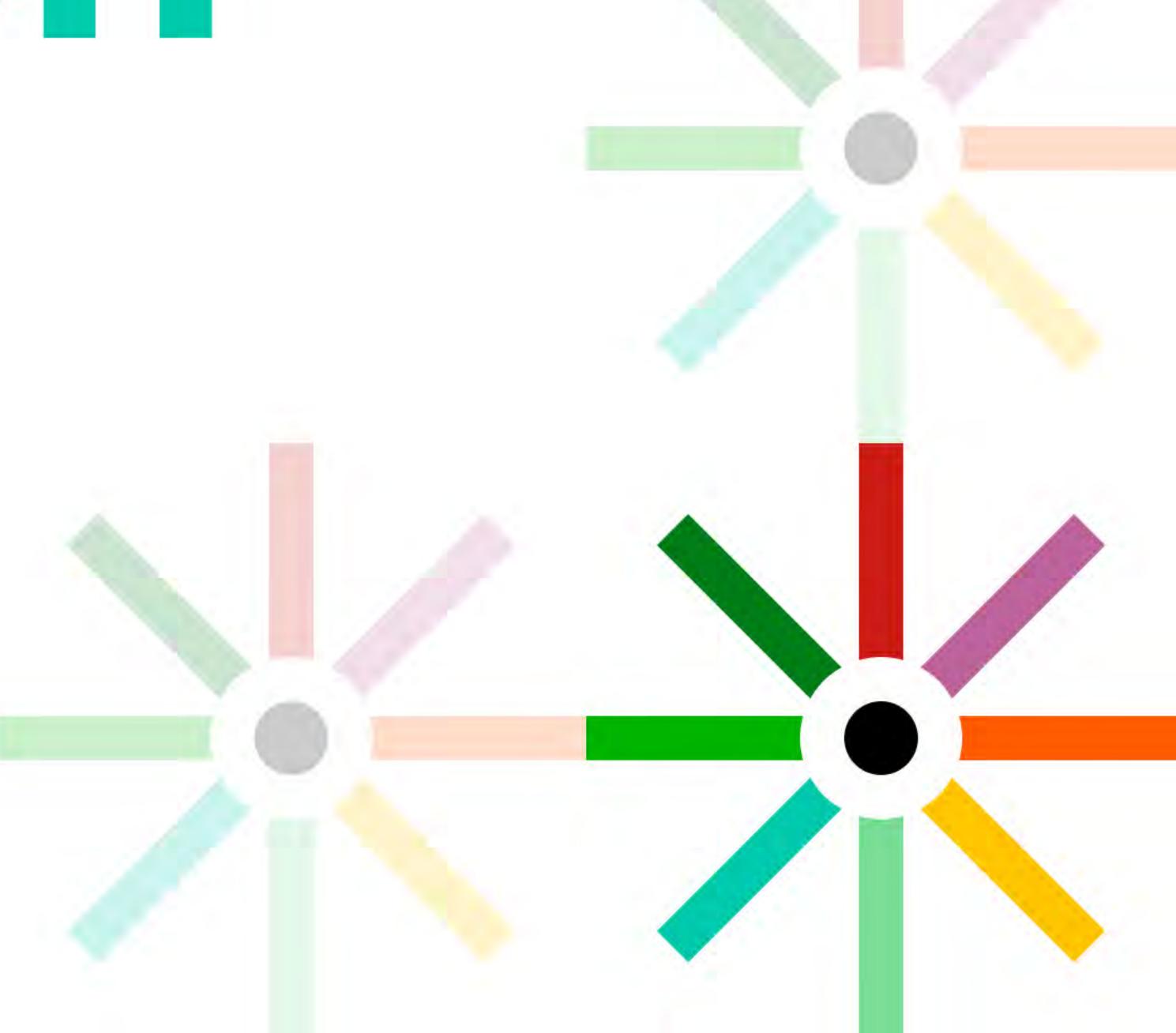
D2 Better consistency across countries.

O3 Shared understanding for better comparison.



CHAPTER 09

Here is the conclusion



Yes, things are moving



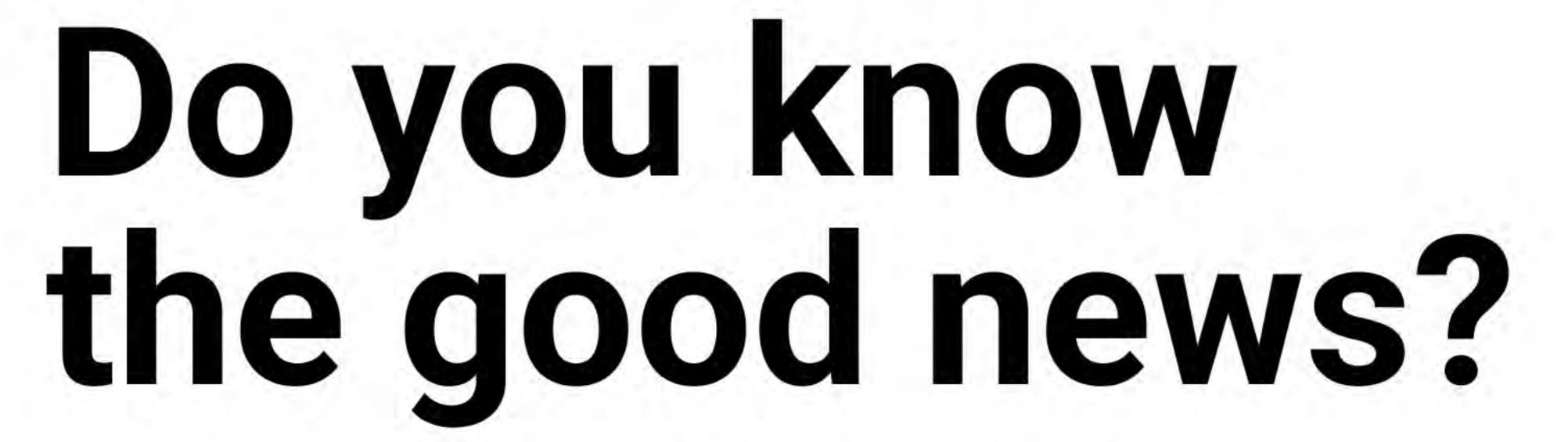
But the reality is: it's not enough. Not yet.

This European benchmark highlights both encouraging progress and clear blind spots in the transition toward more sustainable and inclusive events.

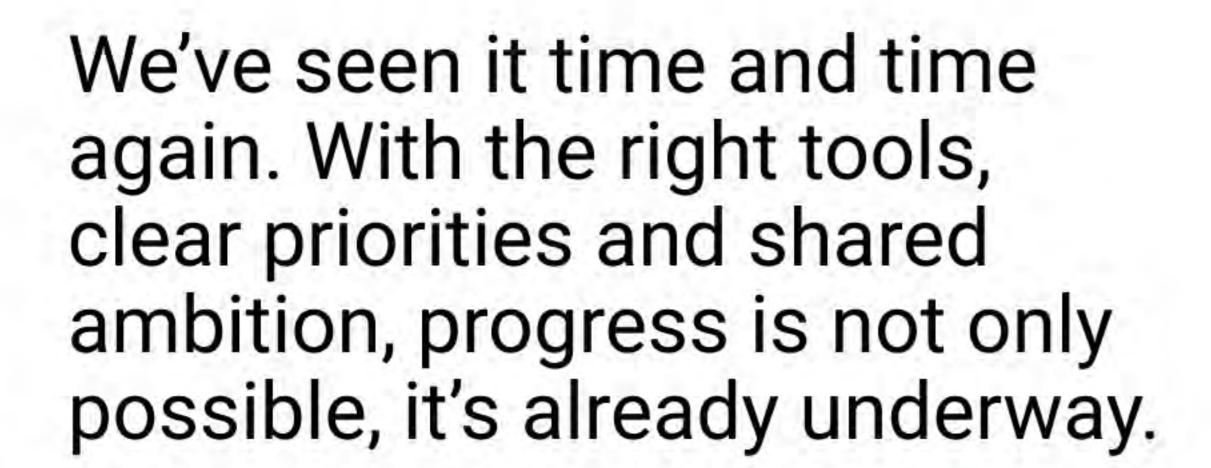
→ We're seeing better choices around travel, more circular practices, and stronger alignment with the <u>Sustainable</u> <u>Development Goals</u> (SDGs).

Events have a powerful role to play. They connect people, ideas and cultures. They create moments that matter. To truly contribute to the Paris
Agreement, and stay relevant
in a rapidly changing world,
the event sector needs to go
further, faster.

But if we want events to keep this role in the future, they must also prove that collective experiences can be built responsibly, and lead by example.



This industry is creative, resilient, and adaptable.



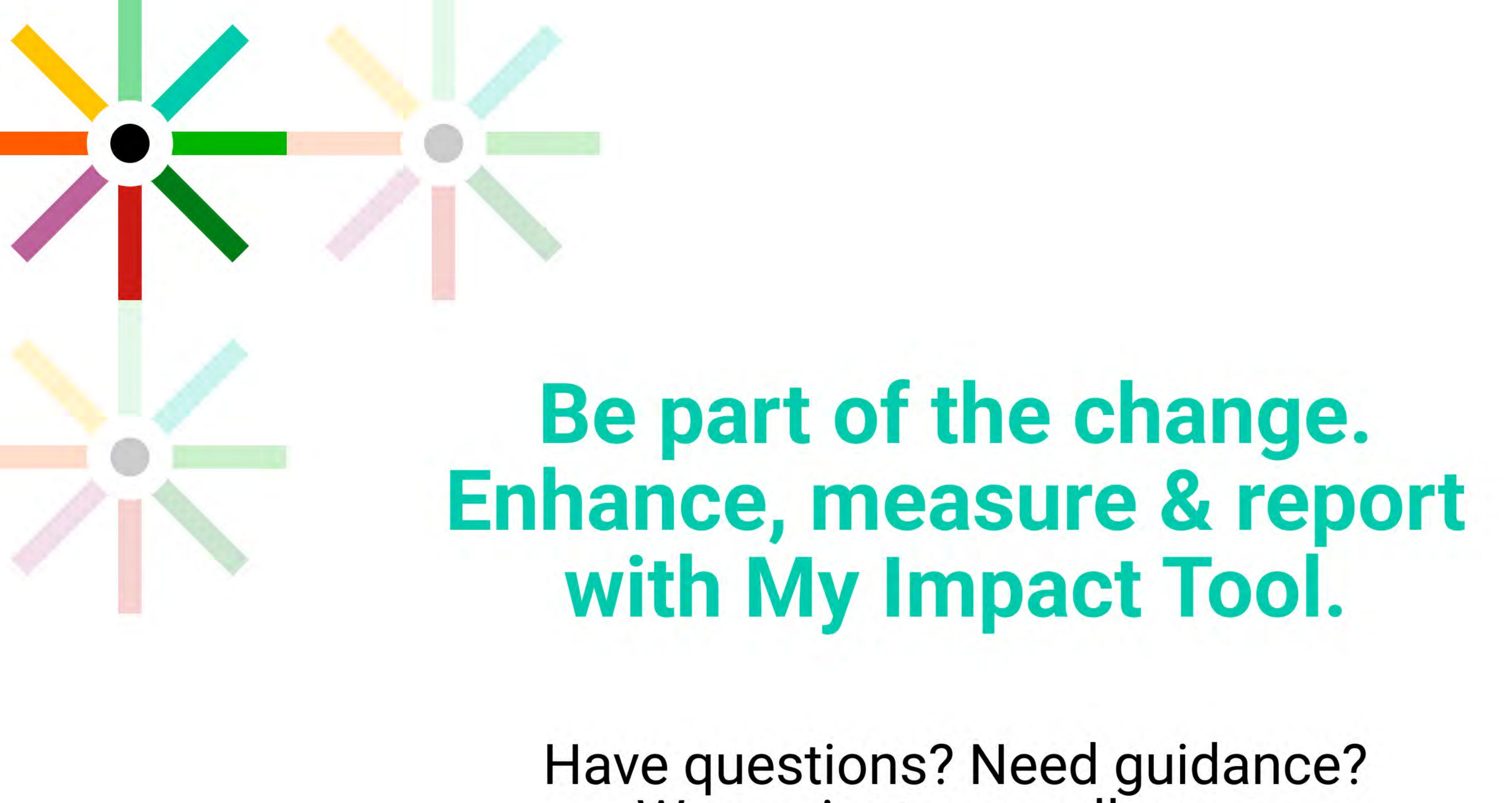
This benchmark isn't just a snapshot, it's a starting point. It gives you a solid ground to act.

It helps understand where you stand, align with stakeholder expectations, and design event strategies that are ready for what's next.

→ Want to go further? Use My Impact Tool to measure, compare, and improve your performance. Help shape the next benchmark, together.



Now let's build events that are not just memorable, but meaningful with My Impact Tool.



We are just one call away.

Book a call with our team today



