# Sustainability
# Event Audit

# Arena* Berlin

Event:
Arena* Berlin
2023

Location:
Berlin, Germany

Dates:
04–06 October
2023

Attendees:
320 hoteliers,
partners, speakers,
and colleagues

From:
41 countries

Once a year, you—the visionaries of our hotels—come together for Arena* to explore what lies in store for the future of purposeful travel. We know that an in-person event of this scale, with 300+ guests requires intention, planning, and dedication to making it as sustainable as possible. While we can't avoid emissions, especially from global travel, the act of tracking and analyzing our actions provides an understanding about where we were the most and least effective.

# Why We Audit

We are not required by legislation to audit our own events but as a travel and hospitality platform, we believe it is our responsibility to be critically aware of the environmental impact of our own activities.

The four objectives of our audit were to:
- Report Arena* 2023 CO$_2$ emissions
- Analyze Arena* 2023 efforts against our Conscious Event Guidelines
- Compare Arena* 2023 results with 2022
- Improve our Conscious Event Guidelines for 2024

Following Arena* in Crete in 2022, we created a Sustainability Event Audit to trace our carbon footprint and establish a baseline for future analyses. From this, we were able to produce our Conscious Event Guidelines (CEG), an open-source document that outlines the myriad ways we can make events more sustainable. In sharing this information freely and publicly, we hope to empower others on their own conscious journeys.
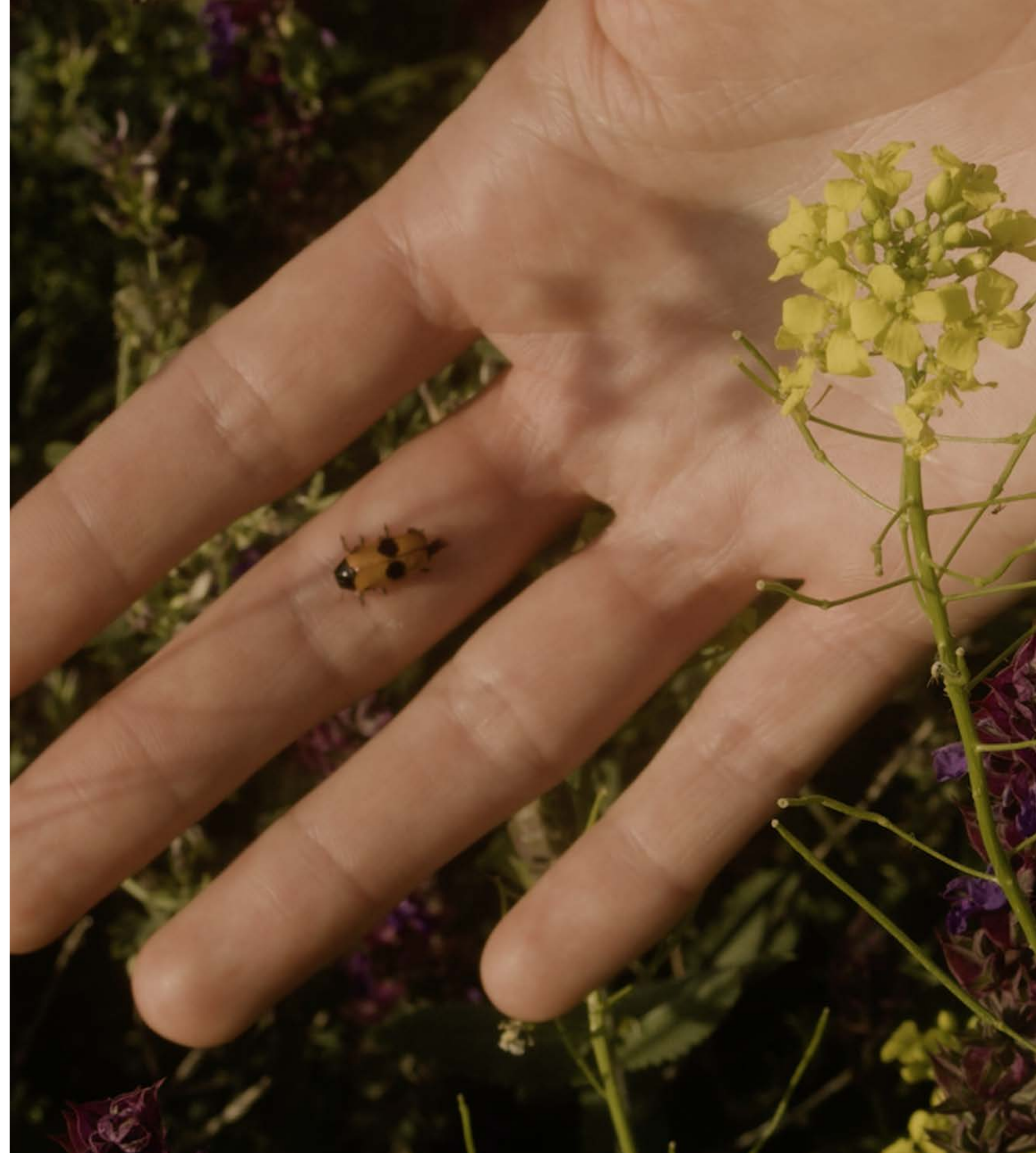
# How We Audit

To calculate the event's carbon footprint, we focused on five primary categories:

1.  Business Travel
2.  Purchased Goods and Services
3.  Electricity
4.  Mobile Combustion
5.  Waste Generated in Operations

With the support of Normative, our carbon accounting partner, we were able to calculate our event's carbon footprint based on our attendee survey and data provided by suppliers. We did not include emissions from freight, venue decor, etc. due to the complexity of the task.

**Accessibility**

Choosing to host Arena* in a major city like Berlin ensured better accessibility for attendees with multiple direct travel options. This decision also eliminated the need to fly for location scouting, aligning with our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint. We provided shuttle buses to transport the attendees to the venues.

**Waste**

We proactively considered the afterlife of products used for the event, reducing, re-using & recycling where possible, e.g. reducing printed paper assets, re-purposing decorations, and using certified compostable paper for the coffee cups.

**Water**

Guests were encouraged to drink filtered tap water with reusable glass bottles provided by our partner Leogant, on the day of the main conference.

**Products & Produce**

We meticulously assessed production items, favoring more sustainable options. Examples include digital programs, reusable shared menus, reusable glass bottles, and thoughtful gifts like the La Bottega x Design Hotels toiletries bag.

**Culture & Diversity**

The aim of our program was to create a diverse lineup of talent & topics. Given the international nature of Berlin, we were able to capitalize on local talent with varying backgrounds and perspectives, striking a balance between quality, equity, and sustainability.

**Communication**

We increased awareness around the topic of sustainability via the production team, partner hotels, and guest briefing. We also created a Sustainability page to inform our guests about travel arrangements, sustainable options, and code of conduct, etc.

Compostable paper cups & glass bottles, courtesy of **Leogant**

Wellbeing session **by Steph Cusack**

**Our sustainability workshop** I pledge Alliance to... a Sustainable Future



Discussion panel on **The Regenerative Era**

Performance **by A Song For You**

—— "It would be nice to support a local initiative as a collective."

—— "Conference venue within walking distance to the hotel would
 save some emissions on buses, etc."

—— "This year, I could feel that Design Hotels really made
a huge effort with making the communication digital and no need
for goodie bags in hotel rooms (noted and appreciated)!"

Together with our carbon accounting partner Normative,
we have calculated our Event Carbon Footprint in
Scope 1, 2, and 3 for Arena* Berlin from 4 to 6 October 2023.

# 401.20 tCO$_2$e

**Carbon Emissions 2023**
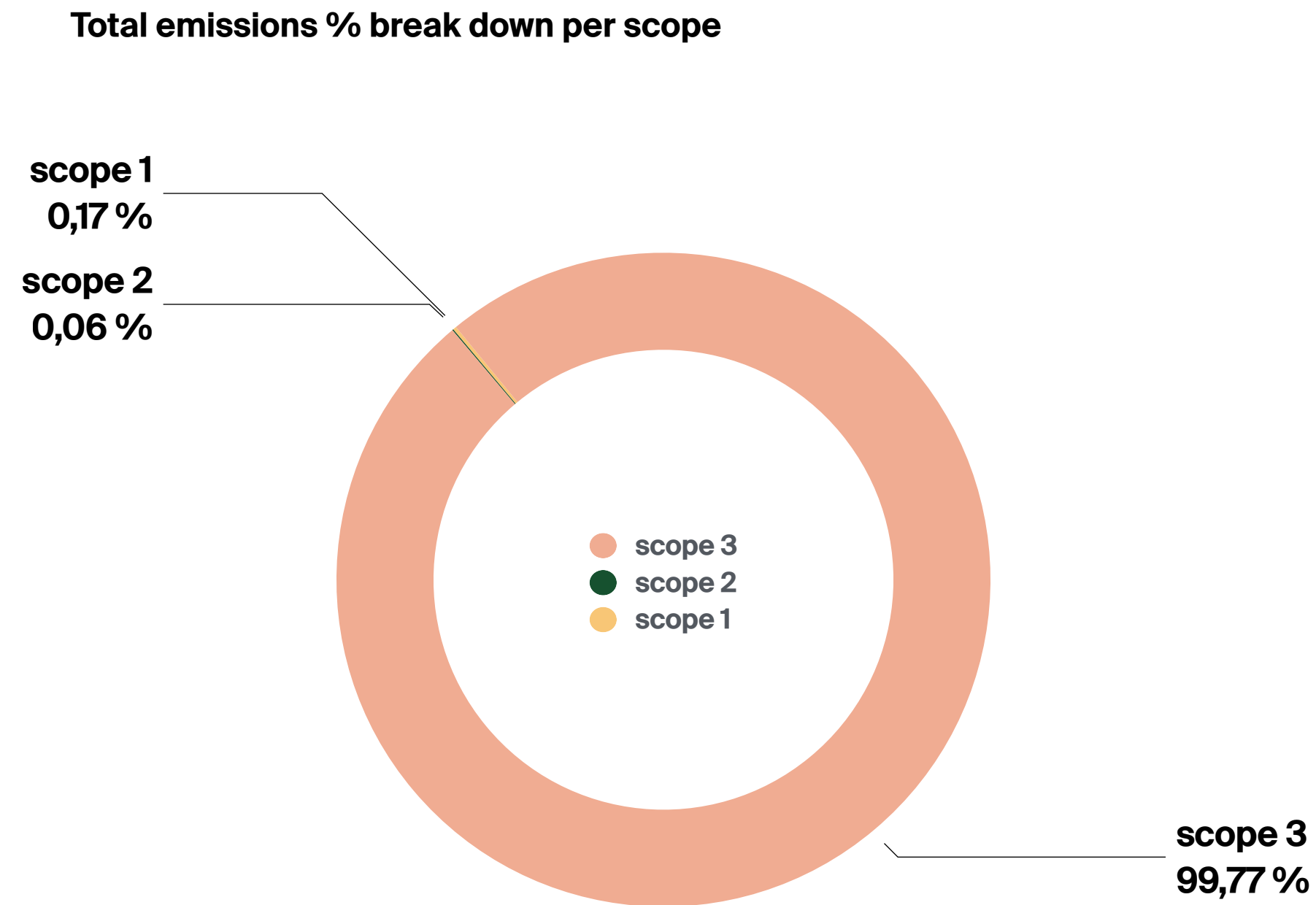
### Scope 1
Represents direct emissions resulting from our shuttle services
(bus and boat), referred to in the report as mobile combustions.
Total Scope 1 emissions: **0,23 tCO$_2$e,**

### Scope 2
Represents indirect emissions resulting from electricity. Total
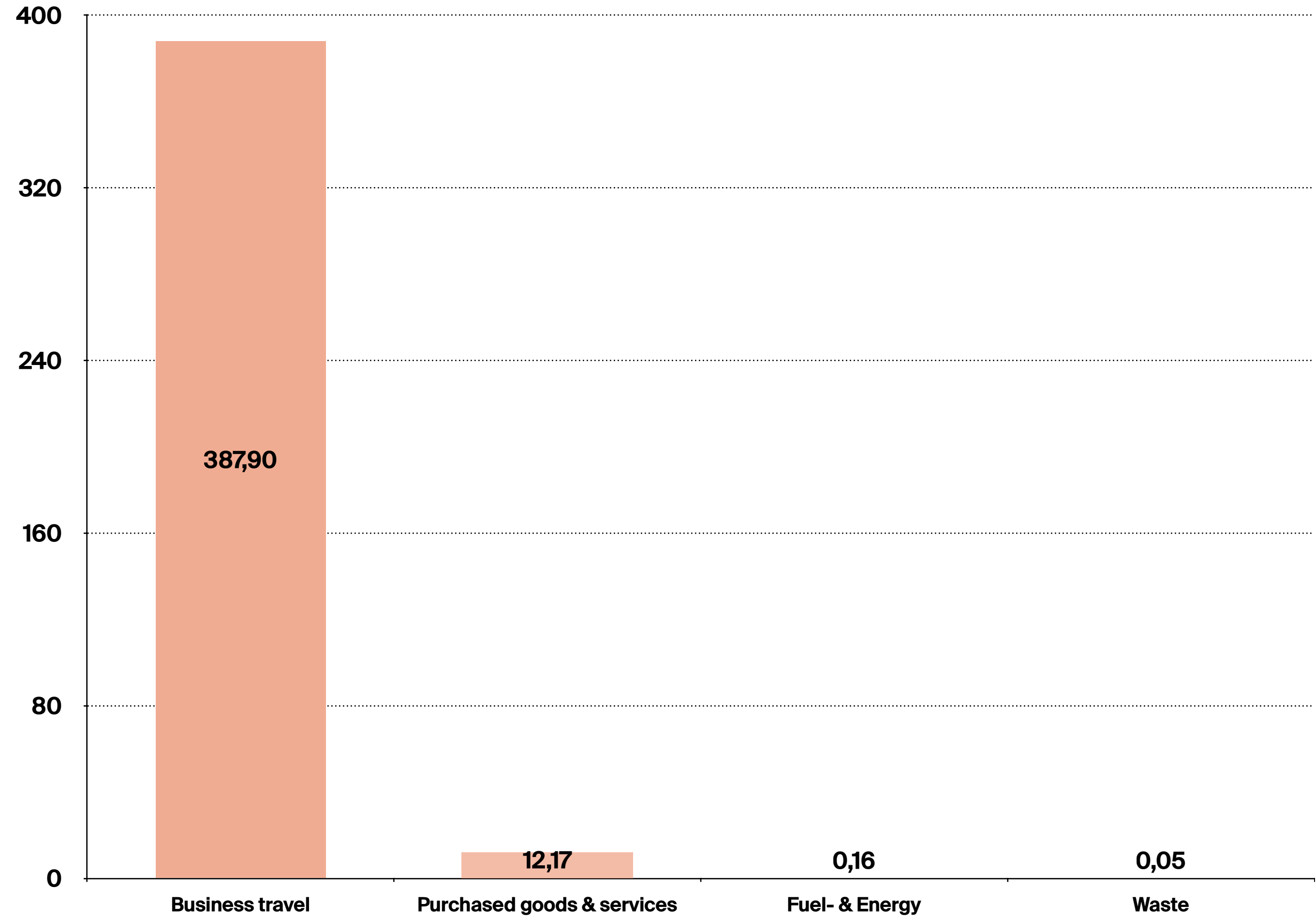Scope 2 emissions: **0,69 tCO$_2$e.**

### Scope 3
Represents other indirect emissions in our upstream value chain.
The report includes business travel, purchased goods & services,
fuel- & energy-related activities, and waste generated in
operations. Our supply chain makes up more than 99% of our
emissions, of which more than 96% is business travel. Total
Scope 3 emissions: **387,90 tCO$_2$e.**

**Total emissions % break down per scope**

scope 1
0,17 %

scope 2
0,06 %

scope 3
● scope 3
● scope 2
● scope 1

scope 3
99,77 %

# Sustainability Event Audit Key result

As evidenced by the results, most of the $CO_2$ was due to Scope 3 emissions from travel.

- 🟡 **Scope 1**
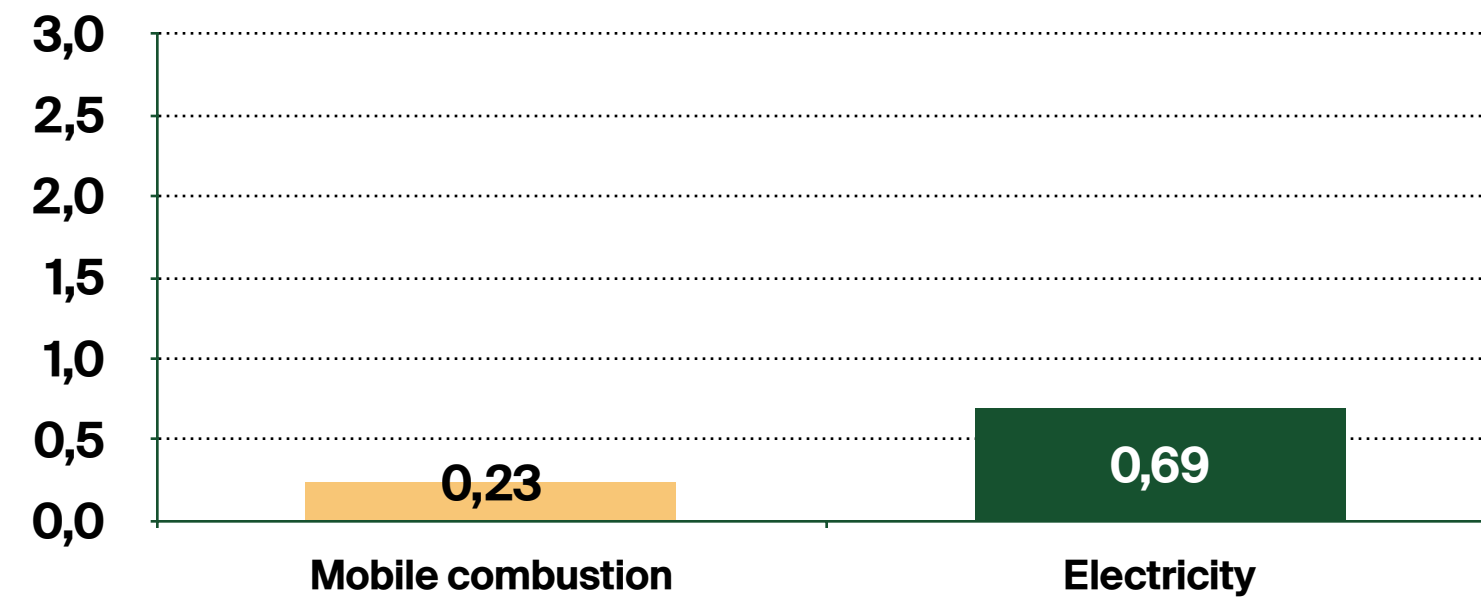- 🟢 **Scope 2**
- 🔴 **Scope 3**

## Scope 3 emissions by category in tCO₂e



| | Business travel | Purchased goods & services | Fuel- & Energy | Waste |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 387,90 | 12,17 | 0,16 | 0,05 |

## Scope 1 emissions by year in tCO₂e

## Scope 2 emissions by year in tCO₂e

| Mobile combustion | Electricity |
|---|---|
| 0,23 | 0,69 |

# Sustainability Event Audit Key Results

## Attendees
In 2022, a total of 265 attendees from 35 countries attended the event, whereas in 2023, we had 320 people from 41 countries. This resulted in a significant increase of Carbon Emissions caused by the business travel metric.
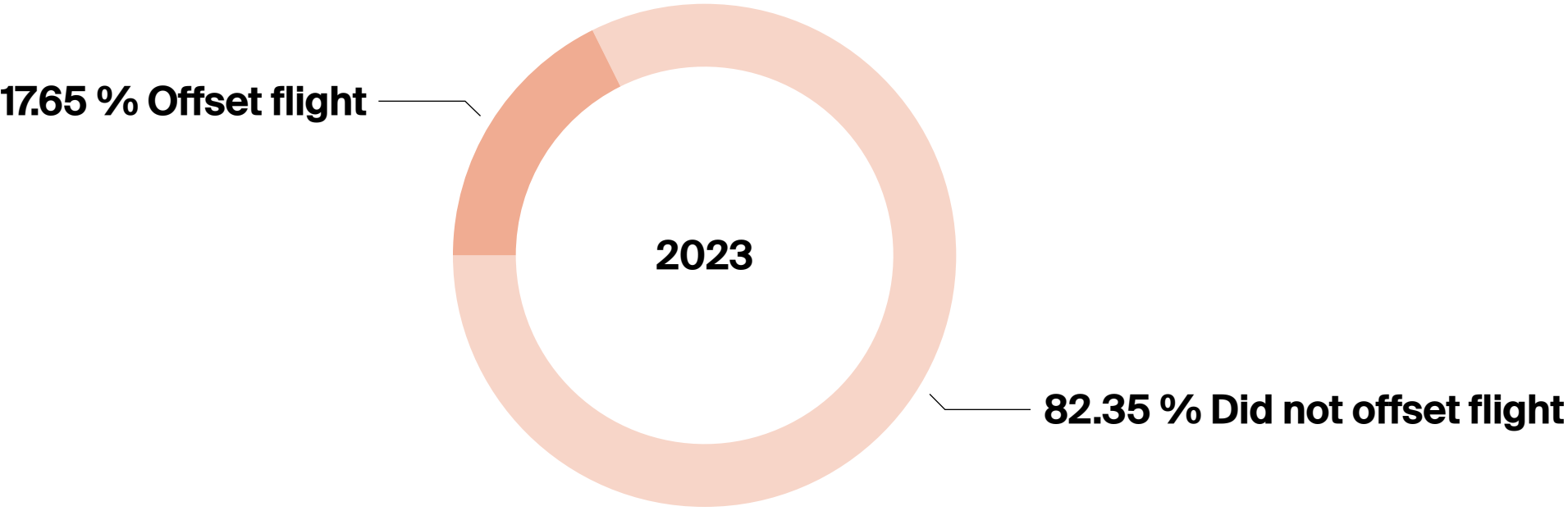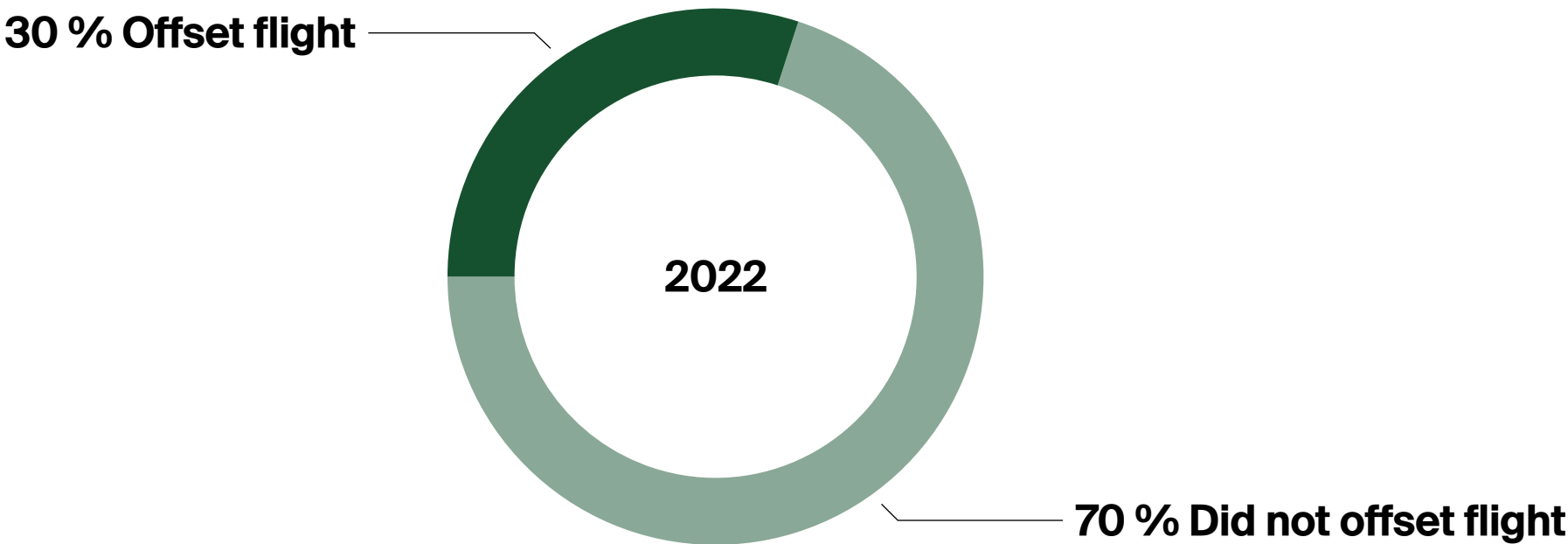
## Business Travel
The survey results from our attendees for 2023 also revealed that 11.76% of attendees opted for train travel, due to the accessibility of the host city, Berlin.

## Offset
In 2022, 30% of participants chose to offset their flights, while the percentage decreased to 17.65% in 2023. While carbon offsetting should always be considered a "last resort" rather than a "free ride," we also had a budget of €4,000 to offset parts of the emissions created by participant travel in 2023. This year, we decided to support the Amazon Basin Protection Project, as listed by our partner Southpole.

## Destination
While we can't avoid flying, we will continue to focus on destinations with direct flight access for our planning and reporting in the future.

**30 % Offset flight**

**2022**

**70 % Did not offset flight**

**17.65 % Offset flight**

**2023**

**82.35 % Did not offset flight**

# 1.077 tCO$_2$e
**Travel emissions per attendee 2022** Excluding offset

# 1.254 tCO$_2$e
**Travel emissions per attendee 2023** Excluding offset

We Are Conscious

# Appendix

# Conscious Event Guideline Check List

## Location & Accessibility
- Choose a location with sustainable architecture that fulfils green building standards (e.g. LEED-certified).
- Consider a destination that is most accessible to where guests will be traveling from.
- Reduce damage to grass and outdoor areas to avoid waste and impact on the environment.
- Encourage the design and build of the event to be based on standard hire items with minimal construction.
- Avoid approaches that are not reusable.
- Reduce site inspections. If you need to travel somewhere, try combining it with other meetings to reduce the number of times you travel.
- Minimize the number of contributors flying in from overseas, including speakers, artists, photographers, videographers, partners, etc.
- Encourage attendees to use public transport to travel to the event. Inform them of the options prior to arrival.
- Set up a carpool or provide shuttle buses if driving is essential. Use electric or hybrid cars, or cars using alternative fuels, if possible.
- Offer bike racks, bike storage areas, or a bike concierge at the event.
- Choose DMCs. operators, and airlines that have green policies and actively work to reduce their impact on the environment.

## Waste
- Provide recycling bins where participants can separate waste at the venue and in guestrooms.
- Ensure recycling is in place at the event location and monitor its effectiveness.
- Make sure meeting rooms and public spaces have a "waste station" with clearly marked recycling, compost, and trash bins.
- Ensure excess food is composted or collected and donated.
- Monitor RSVP and attendance numbers to ensure supply is tailored to the number of guests, thereby avoiding waste.
- Investigate outlets and avenues for recycling unwanted or excess items and products to reduce waste.
- Don't offer materials in abundance.
- Encourage participants to return their name tags and lanyards after the event.

## Energy & Water
- Choose event partners that use green energy whenever possible.
- Provide tap water instead of bottled water.
- Work with the venue to reduce power and air-conditioning use when not requred.
- Choose generator suppliers that use modern, fuel-saving, environmentally friendly units, such as biodiesel.
- Exhibitions are a major source of excess power, as equipment is often left on overnight. Appoint a staff member to be responsible for ensuring that lighting and power use is reduced.
- Venue should take advantage of natural resources where possible, including natural light, tap water, and fresh air.
- Venue should actively implement procedures that limit unnecessary towel and linen changing.
- Offset event-associated carbon emissions with a credited third-party provider.
- Encourage participants to reduce the environmental impact of their flight (combine with a holiday, offset flights, use direct flights when possible).

## Products & Produce
- Provide tap water instead of bottled water.
- Eliminate or reduce single-use plastics (bottles, packaging, signage, etc.) as much as possible.
- Reduce meat products.
- Choose local and seasonal F&B.
- Buy products made from recycled materials when possible.
- Make arrangements with suppliers for the return of unwanted or unused products and materials, such as printing cartridges, containers, and packaging.
- Recycle materials from build/stage, etc. after the event.
- Reducing the amounts of paper used for marketing (e.g. by printing on both sides of the page, minimizing the number of handouts distributed, and recycling the folders and brochures on display)
- Consideration of the environmental and social criteria and labels when selecting gifts for quests/participants
- Avoid single use decorative items, for example rented potted plants, or dried flowers versus fresh cut flower.

## Community, Culture & Content
- Support local businesses, creators, and initiatives.
- Participants should get involved in a local activity to give back to the community (e.g. volunteer to support a cause).
- The majority of suppliers should be local to integrate with the local community (e.g. use local talent).
- Create a diverse program of contributors and partners.
- Be respectful of the communities we enter. Educate the team and participants on local customs.
- Chose sustainable recreational activities that do not detract from the natural and social environment.

## Communication
- Reduce printed promotional materials. Supply electronically instead
- Livestreaming or recording could allow people to participate without flying.
- Ensure practices are put in place to encourage recycling and minimal use of resources. Put up signs to help remind and educate participants.
- Reduce the amount of dead stock with merchandise and gift bags at events.
- Submit proposals and quotes electronically and reduce handouts in meetings.
- Look for touchpoints during the event where sustainability efforts can be communicated as transparently as possible.
- Create a communication plan for before, during, and after the event.
- Engage the public (through PR for example)
- Train the organizing team and everyone involved in the preparation and execution of the event

# Glossary

**Carbon Accounting**
Carbon accounting is the process of measuring how much carbon dioxide equivalents (CO2e) an organization (company, state, etc.) emits.

**Carbon Footprint**
All of the greenhouse gas emissions (both direct and indirect) associated with a specific product or activity.

**Offsetting**
Carbon offsetting is the process of balancing a business's carbon emissions by removing a proportionate amount of carbon from the atmosphere. In theory, there's nothing wrong with this. In fact, carbon removal is the necessary final step of a company's net zero journey. In practice, however, the term "carbon offsetting" has become associated with low-quality activities which can be way less effective than the businesses that purchase them believe. This leads companies to unintentionally "greenwash" by only compensating a fraction of their carbon footprint.

**Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO$_2$e)**
For any greenhouse gas, the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO$_2$e) is the mass of CO$_2$ which would warm the earth as much as the mass of that gas. CO$_2$e provides a common scale for measuring the climate effects of all greenhouse gases.

**Greenhouse gas (GHG):**
A greenhouse gas (GHG) is a gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range, causing the greenhouse effect and thereby global warming.

**Scope 1**
Scope 1 emissions are direct GHG emissions that a company generates while performing its business activities. This includes generation of electricity, manufacturing and processing of materials, waste processing, and transportation using the company's own vehicle fleet.

**Scope 2**
Scope 2 emissions are the indirect emissions generated by the production of purchased energy.

**Scope 3**
Scope 3 emissions (also known as value chain emissions) are all indirect emissions that occur in the value chain of a company and are not already included within scope 2. These emissions are a consequence of the company's business activities, but occur from sources the company does not own or control. Scope 3 emissions include the following:
- Emissions generated in the company's supply chain, such as extraction, production, and transportation of purchased materials and fuels.
- Emissions generated from the use of sold products and services.
- Emissions generated from waste disposal. This includes the disposal of waste generated both in operations and in the production of purchased materials and fuels, as well as disposal of sold products at the end of their life.

# Methodology

**Greenhouse Gas Protocol**
Our footprint calculations follow the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's guidance. The protocol is the most widely used standard on how to calculate and present emissions for sustainability reports. The underlying data for our emission estimates is a mix of material and activity data as well as transaction data for which our partner has identified emission factors.

**Normative**
Normative helps businesses reduce their carbon footprints by offering science-based carbon accounting software and tailored advice from net-zero specialists.

**Participant Survey**
After Arena, a participant survey was sent out to get additional opinions and insights about the event.
Out of 320 guests, 40 responded to our survey. This is a small percentage, but it gave us important information.

# Contact

**Publication Date:**
20th December, 2023

**Imprint**
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**Contact**
We welcome feedback and comments from our stakeholders. Your input is crucial as we continue to evolve on our impact journey.

If you'd like to know more about anything we've discussed in this report, then please get in touch:

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