



Photo by Romain Bassenne

CITY, COUNTRY

Paris, France

DAILY CAPACITY

40,000

SITE

Le Bois de Vincennes, the city's second biggest park

CAMPING

No

NUMBER OF DAYS

3

ESTABLISHED IN

2011

GENRE

Music, Art, Food, Talks, Start-up and NGO programme

CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

Pioneering eco-friendly production techniques by including the entire production team



FRENCH LABORATORY FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENT SOLUTIONS

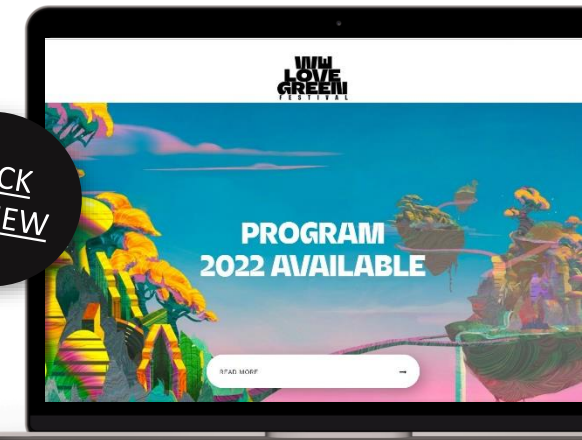
WE LOVE GREEN is a self-proclaimed laboratory for sustainable innovation in the live events sector. Its aim is to test green solutions and prove that it is possible to combine our current lifestyle with a sustainable development. “Our pioneering eco-friendly production techniques are an essential element of the festival, and they adhere to an eight-point sustainability charter which focuses on: energy, food services, water, waste management, transportation, raising awareness, carbon offsetting and circular economy,” explains Marie Sabot, co-founder of WE LOVE GREEN.

The festival programme includes music, art, food, talks as well as a start-up and NGO area. “We bring together 5 musical stages, 60 live artists and DJs, 60 speakers, 51 restaurants, eco-designed art and

creative production, 30 start-ups and NGOs, a kids club as well as films and documentary extracts screenings on all stages between the shows,” Sabot elaborates.

The festival remains independent to this day and Sabot’s motivation to become active in sustainability is very personal, she tells us, “I come from the South of France, where people worked in agriculture and wine. As a child, I saw the change from market gardening and orchards to very large farms, the intensification of treatment on the vines and the arrival of harvesting machines.” She describes this as an “alarming development”, the beginning of “disconnection between human and nature and the loss of a large culture of wine and territories”.

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TO VIEW



Photos by Romaine Bassenne (top) and Adu Parc (bottom)



THE CHALLENGE

PIONEERING ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

It takes quite a while to scroll through all of WE LOVE GREEN's ecological achievements. In 2022, the festival introduces an energy mix composed of solar panels, some green hydrogen generators and fuel cells, and various biofuel generators. 95% of the light sources are LED. The festival has created an online tool that helps both festivalgoers and artists to calculate their carbon footprint caused by travelling to the festival and to offset the emissions. In 2019, they planted 80,000 trees with the search engine Ecosia.

WE LOVE GREEN separates waste into 11 categories (e. g., bio, recyclable, cooking oils), which are all processed in a dedicated chain to reach full circularity. In 2019, 81% of the waste was recycled. They have created a material exchange hub to recycle used set designs. In the last edition, 15,000 cigarette butts were collected and recycled. A specialized company from France can clean the highly toxic cellulose acetate filters and turn them into items like ashtrays, pencil pots and even furniture.

Food at WE LOVE GREEN is locally-sourced, seasonal and organic. 100% of the food traders offer a vegetarian or vegan dish, 50% of them are fully vegetarian or vegan. Plates and napkins are compostable and turned into fertilisers used for local agriculture; the cutlery

is recycled. In 2022, festival staff and artists catering use hard tableware and have a dishwasher system, managed by a service centre which supports people with a disability into work.

In 2019, 2600 unsold meals were distributed to charities, avoiding destroying 3.1 tonnes of food. Through an eco-cup deposit scheme and by using reusable bottles they saved more than 280,000 plastic bottles in 2019. There are 100 free water taps to fill the reusable jars. The festival has a zero single-use plastic policy, valid also for crew and artists. Using only compost toilets saved 2.1 million litres of water and the toilet waste created 22,000 litres of compost. Urine was even turned into agricultural fertiliser, then distributed to local farmers.

In addition to this, WE LOVE GREEN analyses the CO₂ output of each edition of the show; this includes asking the partners for detailed information. "Calculating carbon emissions remains the best way to improve our practices," Sabot says. The goal is, firstly, to reduce the carbon output and, secondly, to offset these emissions. Additionally, an impact study on local biodiversity will be conducted in 2022 to better understand how the festival affects biodiversity and how to improve this.

CREATING CHARTERS FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE FESTIVAL

WE LOVE GREEN created their strategy on sustainability by meeting with other cultural organisations and exchanging ideas with a wide range of people from other fields, too, Sabot says. “The festival had clear goals, but could not realize everything as planned, either because of a lack of time or means. Thus, we had to establish a strategy to overcome these shortcomings,” the co-founder adds. Which measures to include to reduce the impact of the festival depends on different criteria: how sustainable the solutions are, how economically feasible they are, and how technologically or methodologically advanced they are.

To make these measures work in practice, WE LOVE GREEN tries to get everyone who is involved in the festival to become involved in sustainability as well; the festival has created a charter for each of the five different groups of participants; event production, artists, food & drink, volunteers, partners and service providers (toilets, bars and technicians).

The charters serve as guidelines for ecologically responsible behaviour. For example: food traders pledge to respect the 15 food service criteria (traceability, certified, packaging, etc.); the partners’ teams, the service providers, and the overall 1000

volunteers commit to respecting recycling and water-/energy-saving instructions. Before each edition of WE LOVE GREEN, the staff are made aware of the approach to sustainability, its implementation in production, and charters are shared at each department. “Our artists have to sign a green policy charter in their contract, where we explain all the measures on the festival,” Sabot says. “This includes the carbon offsetting of their journey and no single-use plastics backstage.”

There is no charter for the audience. “We know that our audience comes, because the essence of the festival has been eco-responsible since the beginning. I think that, even if not all our festival goers are committed, they all know that they are coming to a committed festival,” Sabot says.

“To communicate sustainability successfully, WE LOVE GREEN adopts the most education-focused approach possible without treating our audience like children” she continues. The festival publishes the progress of their sustainable developments, linking it to proven or provable data. The communication maintains a playful but empowering tone without being guilt-inducing.

THE SOLUTION



SUSTAINABILITY CAN CREATE REVENUE

The festival director estimates that creating an ecologically responsible festival costs on average about 30% more. However, being an expert on sustainability also opens up new revenue streams.

The team gives lectures about their experiences and advises public institutions; for example, the committee organising the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024 in Paris (COJO) contacted the festival, because they wanted to learn more about producing environmentally-friendly major events. Furthermore, the festival was a consultant for the Ministry of Ecology to produce a more sustainable COP 21 in Paris.

WE LOVE GREEN also receives public funding through a pan-European Creative Europe project which is run by the festival: Green Europe Experience (GEX) focuses on the two major topics of food and scenography. “We want to improve the festivals’ model of creation and production based on the circular economy model and its 7 Rs. The goal is to reduce their ecological impact ever more while increasing their positive social impact,” Sabot explains.

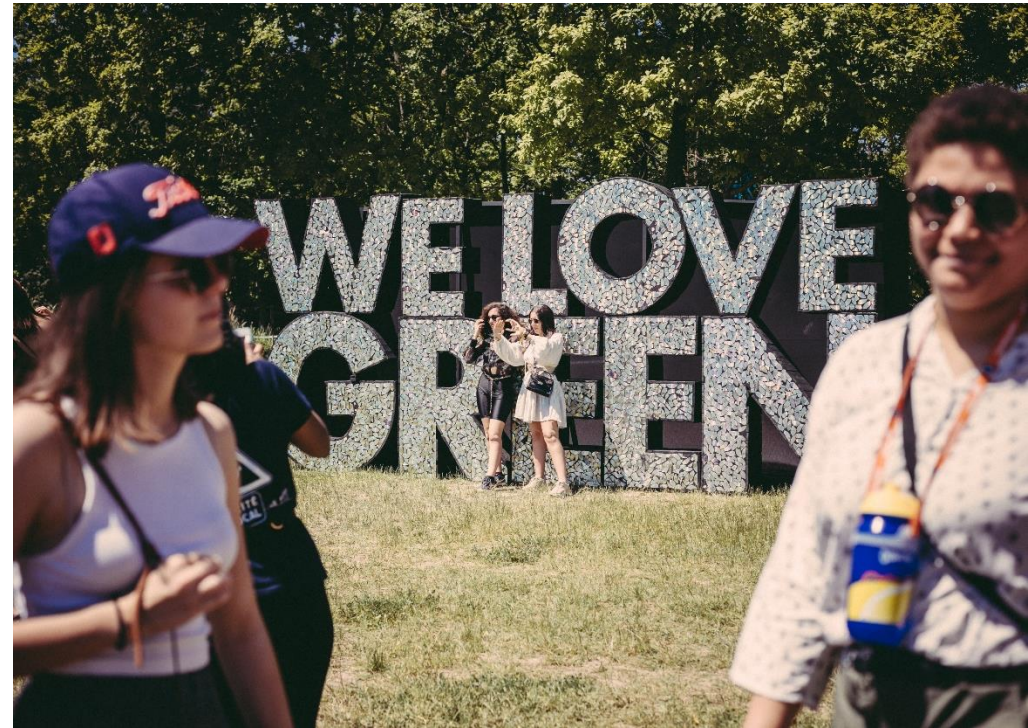


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WHAT'S NEXT?

WE LOVE GREEN wants to become 100% circular by 2025. The festival is one of about 20 international festivals like Roskilde, DGTL and Shambala that are part of the Green Deal Circular Festivals initiative. These festivals have signed an agreement, created by Netherlands-based Green Events International and the Dutch government, to adopt a sustainable, circular economy. The aim is to design a blueprint for resilient and circular festivals everywhere by 2025.

The two next major challenges for WE LOVE GREEN are, according to Sabot, materials and energy; the sorting of waste, particularly food waste, that sorting service providers sometimes neglect, going further in composting and testing new energy sources and processes.