2024

AEC Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

AEC

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Policy

This policy seeks to ensure that the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) operates in an environmentally sustainable way in all that it does.

Purpose

Its purpose is to define how the AEC will operate in an environmentally sustainable way.

Scope

Governance

This policy will be reviewed every year, is overseen by the AEC's Council and will be implemented through the associated Sustainability Action Plan, managed by the AEC's Green Team.

Related Policies & Procedures

This policy will affect all policies and procedures, including but not limited to the daily functioning of the AEC office, the events organisation, and the travel and communication with the AEC members.
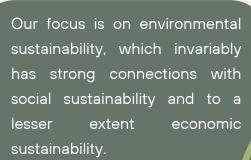
Responsibilities

This policy applies to all staff, including interns, and to all Council members.

Staff is required to ensure that in any activities that they undertake or projects that they manage or co-manage as part of their duties, the Sustainability policy is complied with in both letter and spirit.

The Council members are required to ensure that their decisions and the work of the AEC and its staff comply with the Environmental Policy in both letter and spirit.

Our Environmental Approach

As AEC, we acknowledge the connection between human activity and the climate crisis and commit to minimising our ecological footprint, implementing environmentally sustainable practices, and behaving as an example of good environmental practice for our members and other cultural networks.

Our focus is on environmental sustainability, which invariably has strong connections with social sustainability and to a lesser extent economic sustainability.

Accordingly, we aim to achieve very high standards of environmental sustainability throughout our work. This applies both to how we work with others and the way in which we ourselves operate, including anyone working with us. Below we set out the key areas this policy applies to and how we will approach them. The policy is fully supported and welcomed by all employees and has been approved by the AEC Council.

Our Sustainability policy

Governance

- The **AEC Sustainability Policy** and the Action plan will be confirmed by the **AEC Council**. The adopted Sustainability policy will then be presented to the AEC members at the General Assembly.
- The Sustainability Policy will be reviewed and assessed by the **AEC Green team** (and the executive director) annually, including on the basis of regular conversations with the AEC team and is subject to modifications. The Council will review the Sustainability policy on an annual basis, based on reports from the AEC Green team.
- The **AEC members** should be informed regularly of the subsequent amendments to the Sustainability policy.
- The Sustainability Policy will be **accessible to everyone** and will appear on the AEC webpage.

Travel

- The AEC encourages the AEC team, as well as the Council, the WG and TF members and anyone for whom the AEC is financially responsible in terms of travel expenditure to implement the recommendatory document on Green travel (Annexe 1).
- The AEC tracks its carbon footprint and commits to reducing it compared to the 2024 baseline results. All travel financed by the AEC will be included in the **carbon emissions calculator**.
- The AEC encourages its staff to use **environmentally friendly travel** modes while commuting to work and offers the team to **work remotely** several days per week to allow carbon footprint reduction related to commuting.
- While choosing hotels for duty travel, the AEC prioritises accommodations that are environmentally responsible with recognised eco-labels.
- The AEC recognises the fact that more responsible travel could be more pricey and that the search for **environmentally responsible accommodations** could be both more expensive and time-consuming.

Events

- When choosing a venue, the AEC will encourage the hosting institution to implement a Sustainability policy. The venue's readiness to commit to **green events** will be an asset when selecting an event host.
- The AEC commits to low-waste events, trying to create as **little waste as possible**.
- The AEC prioritises **local, organic and plant-based options for catering** and meals.
- The AEC commits to **paperless** events.
- The AEC recommends the participants of the event make **green choices while travelling** to the event (travel to the venue and green accommodations are recommended).
- The AEC acknowledges that the hosting conditions and the possibilities of the hosting institutions vary, however, it commits to make all efforts of organising an environmentally conscious event.

Awareness raising

- The AEC strongly recommends the implementation of **AEC Goes Green** recommendations to its member institutions.
- The AEC regularly informs its members on sustainability matters through newsletter items, workshops, and sessions at the AEC events and with **informative campaigns**.
- The AEC promotes the SHIFT eco-guidelines as inspiration for its members.
- The AEC will continue working towards making the work of its member institutions greener.

Office/Daily activities

- AEC commits to environmentally responsible daily operations, and whenever possible following the **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle** philosophy.
- The AEC will minimise the **energy consumption** in the office.
- The AEC recommends minimising the usage of **printed material** whenever possible.
- The AEC will consider the **digital footprint** and take steps to reduce it.
- The AEC obligates the staff to **separate the waste**.
- The AEC developed a Purchase policy (Annexe II) and will adhere to it.
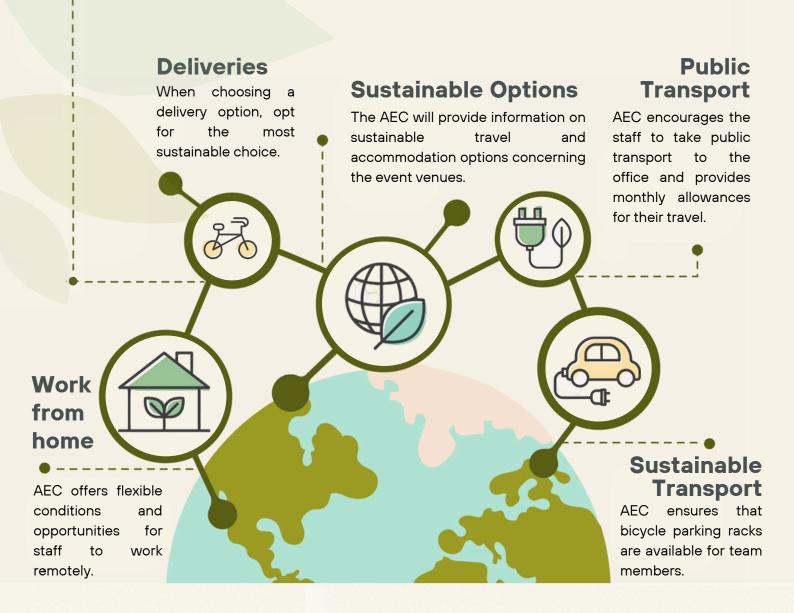
Recommended Travel Guidelines

The AEC staff as well as everyone whose travel is funded by the AEC, is strongly recommended to take a **train for distances of less than 650 km**. For distances over 650 km but less than 8 hours of land travel, it is encouraged to take a train whenever possible, but if flying is necessary, it is recommended to take the train for 50% of travel (e.g. flying for the outbound journey and taking the train for the return trip).

The AEC staff will be incentivised to select **1st class train tickets for work-related travel**, allowing them to comfortably work while travelling with a more sustainable mode of transport.

The AEC recommends **avoiding indirect flights** even if they are less expensive than direct flights. If a destination is difficult to reach, the AEC recommends taking a connection by land rather than using internal flights. If plane travel is necessary, the AEC recommends choosing **flights with a lower carbon footprint.**

The AEC team members will avoid taking a taxi with only one passenger. They are recommended to coordinate with colleagues whenever possible by **sharing a taxi** (e.g., to the airport or event/meeting venue) and prioritising electric or hybrid taxis/Ubers. Whenever feasible, walking to the event/meeting venue is encouraged.

When choosing accommodation for duty travel, select **environmentally-friendly options** or those with recognised eco-labels whenever possible. It is acceptable to pay a reasonable amount more to improve the environmental impact.

Travel and carbon emissions for the AEC team and anyone whose travel is funded by AEC **will be calculated**. The results will be assessed annually by the AEC Green Team and staff.

All trips for which AEC bears financial responsibility, as well as those funded by third parties but undertaken by AEC staff members, should follow AEC's Recommended Travel Guidelines.

Deliveries

When choosing a delivery option, opt for the most sustainable choice.

Sustainable Options

The AEC will provide information on sustainable travel and accommodation options concerning the event venues.

Public Transport

AEC encourages the staff to take public transport to the office and provides monthly allowances for their travel.

Work from home

AEC offers flexible conditions and opportunities for staff to work remotely.

Sustainable Transport

AEC ensures that bicycle parking racks are available for team members.

Recommended Purchase Policy

- AEC is committed to selecting environmentally responsible suppliers and providers that follow eco-policies and offer sustainable products and services.

- AEC will give preference to options that are local, circular, and/or powered by renewable energy.

- For IT and utilities, AEC will choose options with an energy label of A. Whenever possible, the AEC will choose second-hand electronic devices.

- While gifting the AEC staff for special occasions, the AEC will choose environmentally friendly suppliers/local businesses and will avoid purchasing items from companies that have a record of contributing to the climate emergency.

Sustainability Action Plan

AEC Council

- Approve the Sustainability policy
- Discuss and if needed amend the Sustainability policy annually

AEC Green Team

- Develop a Sustainable policy
- The AEC Sustainability Policy and all actions related to the Sustainability and Green transition will appear on the dedicated page of the AEC website
- Add and constantly update the section on the AEC green efforts and presentations/workshops, etc., on the AEC website
- AEC Green Team will encourage the team to make environmentally conscious choices
- The AEC Green Teams will hold regular meetings and will debrief the colleagues on the issues covered
- Introduce and implement a Green travel policy

AEC Events Team

- Continue holding paperless event
- Continue reusing the badges at the next events
- Make sure there are waste stations in the venue
- Offer 50% of vegetarian/vegan options
- Reduce the promotional material
- Recommend using reusable water bottles
- Consider green-label accommodation for the AEC staff and anyone whose travel is funded by the AEC. Encourage the event participants to choose a green-label accommodation
- Encourage using a sustainable mode of transport for getting into the event venue

- While choosing a venue, consider their sustainability policy and accessibility
- Recording the sessions
- Encourage the event participants to use a sustainable means of transport to get to the venue

AEC Team

- The AEC Sustainability efforts and actions for the Green shifts will be included in the Annual report
- The AEC Sustainability efforts and actions for the Green Shift will be presented at the AEC General Assembly
- The work and the activities of the AEC WG group working towards the Green shift will be regularly communicated to the members and the Council
- The AEC staff and everyone whose travel is funded by the AEC should follow the AEC Travel recommendations for work-related travel

- Choose tap water - it's a simple eco-firendly habit that reduces plastic waster

- Consider using an environmentally friendly mode of transport to travel to the AEC office

- Print as little as possible
- Print on both sides of the paper
- Prioritise black-and-white writing
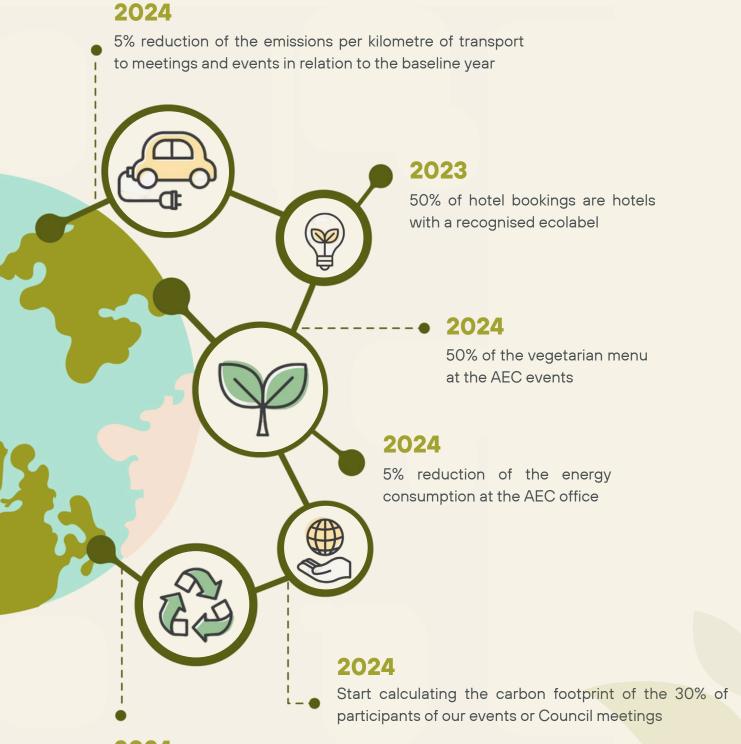- Send the used tuners back to the provider

- Use LED light bulbs in the office
- Unplug electronic devices when they are not in use, as they can still consume energy even when turned off
- Donate or recycle old electronic devices

- Consider alternatives items made of metal, glass, and bamboo
- Make conscious choices for detergents, soaps and other items
- Give priority to refillable detergents, whenever possible
- Consider buying Fairtrade, organic, local coffee, tea/ milk and other supplies
- Stop using bags, bottles, cutlery...

Sustainable Goals

2024

5% reduction of the emissions per kilometre of transport to meetings and events in relation to the baseline year

2023

50% of hotel bookings are hotels with a recognised ecolabel

2024

50% of the vegetarian menu at the AEC events

2024

5% reduction of the energy consumption at the AEC office

2024

Start calculating the carbon footprint of the 30% of participants of our events or Council meetings

2024

30% of gifts for the AEC office staff and speakers are from local businesses or are eco-labelled products

AEC Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

The Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) is a European cultural and educational network with around 300 member institutions for professional music training in 57 countries. The network is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme.

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