



AEC Sustainability Policy and Action plan

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Introduction

Revision History

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	11/09/2024	Reviewed By: AEC Executive Director	
1.0	18.09.2024	Approved by the AEC Council	
2.0	04.09.2025	Reviewed and approved by the AEC Council	
3.0	11.03.2026	To be reviewed and approved by the AEC Council	

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: It applies to all of the AEC's work.

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.

ANNEXE I

Recommended Travel Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to everyone for whom the AEC is financially responsible in terms of travel expenditure.

Local travel/commuting to work:

- AEC encourages the staff to take public transport to the office and provides monthly allowances for their travel.
- AEC offers flexible conditions and opportunities for staff to work remotely.
- To promote sustainable means of transport, AEC ensures that bicycle parking racks are available for team members.

Work-related travel:

- 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/Ubbers. 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.
 - When choosing a delivery option, opt for the most sustainable choice.
 - The AEC will provide information on sustainable travel and accommodation options concerning the event venues.
 - 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.
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Annexe II

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.

AEC Sustainability Action Plan 2026

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Governance

Action	Responsible
In the January 2026 Office meeting, discuss the Action plan results and achievements	AEC team
Implement all mandatory norms of the SHIFT Eco-Guidelines for Networks & 70% of optional norms (5) by December 2026	AEC team
Introduce the AEC newly hired staff members and interns for 2026 to the AEC Green policies by including the AEC Sustainability policy in the job announcement and to intern's package	AEC team
Suggest that AEC Council members join the AEC Green team as guests	AEC Green team
Add information on the AEC Green team to the AEC website	AEC Green team
Review and discuss Creasus report and discuss any suggestions	AEC Green team

Travel

Action	Responsible
When booking tickets for event speakers/WG members, remind of the AEC travel policy and suggest considering low-carbon travel options	AEC Events team
Calculate AEC's average carbon emissions per kilometre, as well as the annual average emissions per employee, using 2025 as the baseline for comparison and present it at the first office meeting of the next year	AEC team
Collect data on participants' travel modes for the AEC's four annual events. Discuss presenting the data at next year's event	AEC Green team
Encourage the use of a sustainable mode of transport to get to the event venue, coordinate with host institution to include low-carbon options to get to the venue	AEC Events team
Introduce the Green travel award and incentives for three AEC events	AEC Green team + AEC Events team
Reduce the annual average emissions from duty travel per AEC staff member by 3%	AEC office team

Events

Action	Responsible

Invite the Green officer to a meeting with the hosts to inform them on the AEC Sustainability policy	AEC Events team
Discuss with the hosting institution the reduction of the promotional material	AEC Events team
Discuss with event hosts the possibility of free-of-charge public transport for the event participants	AEC Events team
Discuss with the host the possibility of measuring the energy/water/waste created at the event	AEC Green team
Provide 30% of gifts for the speakers from local businesses or eco-labelled products	AEC Events team
Offer badge returning option after the event	AEC Events team
Make sure 30% of hotel bookings are made at hotels with a recognised ecolabel	AEC Events team
Provide 60% vegetarian options at the AEC events	AEC Events team

Awareness Raising

Action	Responsible
Add and constantly update the section on the AEC green efforts and presentations/workshops, etc, on the AEC website	AEC Green team

Regularly inform the membership of the AEC Sustainability efforts and actions through AEC social media accounts and newsletters	AEC Green team + AEC Communication team
Send a bi-annual Green newsletter	AEC Green team + AEC Communication team
Encourage the team to make environmentally conscious choices and share environmentally-friendly insights and regularly share updates and ideas	AEC Green team
Include the AEC Sustainability efforts and actions for the Green Shifts in the AEC Annual Report 2026	AEC Staff
Present the AEC Sustainability efforts and actions for the Green Shift at the AEC General Assembly 2026	AEC Staff
Include at least 3 articles per year in AEC newsletters and 4 social media posts, sharing updates on green efforts within the AEC and its membership, achievements, and possibly other related inspirational content.	AEC Communication team
Create and regularly update a section on the AEC and its members' activities on Sustainability on the AEC website	AEC Green team
Create the network of Sustainability/Green officers and hold a minimum of 3 network meetings in 2026	AEC Office team
Advertise the network at the AEC Congress Info forum	AEC Office team

Office and Daily Activities

Action	Responsible
<p>Be conscious of office-related purchases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever buying an item for the office, consider possible alternatives 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. 	AEC Office Manager
<p>Explore the possibility of send the un-used cables and devices to an organisation that recycles them</p>	AEC Office Manager
<p>Establish a digital cleaning day for 2026</p>	AEC office team
<p>Encourage mindful digital activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify internet research by entering a website's URL directly instead of using a search engine when possible. Bookmark the websites used most frequently. • Consider using eco-friendly search engines. • Target recipients carefully when sending emails, as a higher number of recipients increases energy use. Delete any attached documents that are not relevant. Prefer using hyperlinks or compressed documents instead of large attachments • Delete and/or unsubscribe from spam, unwanted email lists, or newsletters. 	AEC office team

<p>Waste management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate waste properly in the office. Introduce the updated blue bag policy • Donate or recycle old electronic devices. • Recycle the gathered glass containers 	AEC Green officer
<p>Saving paper and printing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a stack of printed pages to reuse • Send the used tuners back to the provider. 	AEC Office Manager
<p>Water consumption</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the colleagues on the dangers of water bottle usage 	AEC Green officer
<p>Explore and educate on sustainable financing</p>	AEC Finance Coordinator
<p>Offer 30% of gifts for the AEC office staff from local businesses or eco-labelled products</p>	AEC office team
<p>Reduce with 5% the energy consumption at the AEC office</p>	AEC Office Manager