

# A guide for sustainable event catering



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This guide is intended to deliver recommendations on how to organise a sustainable event within the Amsterdam region. We primarily focus on events such as workshops, meetings and conferences.



## Keep it local

- Locally produced foods & beverages score significantly lower in terms of their emissions related to transportation. We find a 96% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions for a locally produced tea and a 60% reduction for a locally produced beer.
- For local distribution channels, carbon neutral modes of transport can be used (e.g. bicycle) which substantially lower transportation emissions.
- Buying local products is often coupled with buying seasonal products which have shown to have better environmental outcomes.



- The higher the reusability of a product, the lower the associated environmental impact. For example, the reusable sugar cane bottle offered in our pilot event is intended for frequent reuse whereas the plastic water bottle has a relatively low reusability rate.
- Circularity/reusability and zero waste generation are a goal for sustainable events (e.g. by using waste as an input stream for new products).
- We find that up to a 99% reduction in water usage can be obtained with a circular approach in the production of tea.



## Circularity & Reusability

REDUCE  
USE  
CYCLE



## Plant-based foods

- Shifting towards plant-based catering has significant potential to reduce the environmental footprint.
- The livestock sector contributes around 14,5 % to total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. Meat does not only score high on associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions but also on land use and methane emissions and should therefore be avoided.
- Vegetarian foods are desirable as they generally require less land and resources for production than meat products.
- Vegan diets (no dairy products) show the lowest environmental impacts.



## Envisioning sustainable events within the university space and beyond.

We aim to set new standards for event planning to make sustainable events the new norm across Amsterdam's universities and beyond.



## WHAT FOODS AND DRINKS TO CHOOSE?

# Example products that realize the three key sustainability principles: local, circular/reusable and plant-based

*This list shows the products which we identified as sustainable and suitable for low impact events in the Amsterdam region. A more detailed elaboration of the products and their impacts is given in our environmental impact assessment report. However, we would like to stress that many other alternative products are becoming increasingly available. The products should therefore be selected according to the event's objectives.*



### Instock's Pieper Beer

- A locally brewed beer made from "rescued" potatoes (which were discarded from supermarkets)
- This beer offers an innovative approach to food waste and therefore has a much smaller environmental impact when compared to conventional beers.
- We find that the Pieper beer scores about 60% lower in CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions from transportation. The beer also requires less input resources such as water and land as the ingredients do not have to be cultivated.

### Local Tea By Me

- This sustainable tea alternative is locally grown and processed in the Netherlands. It is an organic tea that relies on sustainable production methods such as renewable energy and water efficiency.
- We find a 46-96 % reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with transportation when compared to multinational tea brands.
- Additionally, we find that the Local Tea By Me requires approx. 99% less water and energy when compared to conventional brand tea.



### Join the pipe - water bottle

- A sugar cane-based, reusable water bottle bought from a local organisation in Amsterdam.
- According to our assessment, this water bottle is carbon negative as the carbon captured by the sugar cane plant exceeds the carbon emissions released from transportation. Even without accounting for the carbon capture, the associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the sugar cane alternative are 83% lower when compared to a normal plastic bottle from recycled plastic.
- Although this bio-based bottle scores significantly lower in energy consumption (98%), the production requires approx. 400 % more water (trade-off).

### Vegan banana bread from 'de laatste kruimel' bakery

- This vegan banana bread was locally baked in Amsterdam.
- Our findings reveal that plant-based foods are among the most sustainable food options. We find that vegan foods score even better in terms of their environmental footprint than vegetarian foods.
- We advise to exclude meat/animal based products from the catering menu as they have the highest environmental impacts.



### Tomato-olive roll from 'Hartog Volkoren'

- This savory snack is also locally produced by a bakery located in Amsterdam.
- This vegetarian food item follows our recommendation of focussing mainly on plant-based food products.
- We again, recommend to choose a meat-free alternative due to its better sustainability outcomes.

**All products can be delivered in a carbon neutral way.**



*We selected the Amsterdam based bicycle courier **Tring-Tring** to deliver our sustainable doggy bag to the event participant's homes.*

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*The environmental impact assessment report can be retrieved at <https://bit.ly/3sp6s5a>*