

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION	3
A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY	4
FESTIVAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION	6
FESTIVAL LANDSCAPING, LIGHTING EFFICIENCY	11
FESTIVAL ZERO WASTE DECORATIONS	15
FESTIVAL CATERING	19
FESTIVAL MERCH	22
FESTIVAL PROMOTION, TEAM COMMUNICATION, E-TICKETING	25
WORKSHOPS	28
LIVE SESSIONS	32
WHAT DO WE WANT TO IMPROVE	36
TOOLBOX FOR IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES	38

#### INTRODUCTION

Recently, more and more of us have begun to take an interest in the subject of the environment and climate change. We see their effects in our daily lives and try to counteract them by making greener choices (if only in a micro scale). In this context, the words of philosopher and communication theorist Marshall McLuhan are also becoming more and more tangible: *On the spaceship Earth, there are no passengers. We are all its crew.* 

The following study is one of the results of the *Soulstone Gathering Route (SGR)* project, which we implemented from February to November 2023. It diagnoses the current status of the *Soulstone Gathering Festival* and several other project co-activities. Above all, it describes the steps taken to reduce the negative environmental impact of all *Soulstone Gathering Route* components.

If you are wondering whether cultural events today are more environmentally friendly than they used to be, are interested in how to make unique decorations while limiting the purchase of new materials, or are organizing a concert, recording a music video or implementing a workshop and want to know whether the sustainable approach also applies, we invite you to read the following report.



# A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY

We want to inspire cultural participants and organizers, doom music fans, artists, professionals and amateurs, to make more conscious, proenvironmental decisions and take steps towards a sustainable, green culture.

Therefore, we took a look at our activities and tried to identify existing challenges, as well as describe potential solutions and tools, ways that can contribute to reducing the negative impact on the planet of the industries we are most familiar with, which are the music industry and the intersecting meetings industry.

The report was prepared based on qualitative and mixed-methods research conducted from April to October 2023.

The process was divided into three stages:

- 1. Determination of the existing state and creation of proposals for new solutions possible to be introduced at the festival and in the remaining project activities (desk research, competitive analysis, online project group meetings and brainstorming were conducted, based on which a list of proposals for pro-environmental solutions possible to be introduced at the festival and in the remaining project activities was drawn up);
- 2. Description of the actual introduced solutions (participatory observations conducted during the festival and *Showcase*, interviews held with organizers and people involved in the organization of the festival, survey of participants, indirect observation of *Live Sessions* recordings, observation of online *Workshops* and collection of quantitative data, viewing statistics of materials published in the media, and participation in online workshops);

**3.** Analysis of the results of activities, evaluation, and developing recommendations for the implementation of good practices, with emphasis on the specifics of the music genre and fan community.

The *Soulstone Gathering Festival*, and in particular the *Showcase* (the third day of the festival, a component of the *SGR* project), were the most complex activities of the *Soulstone Gathering Route*, which is why this report devotes most space to precisely describe the various aspects of their organization and implementation (such as transportation, logistics, catering, venue and environment) and their environmental impact.

The other innovative and digital project activities that contribute to the *Soulstone Gathering Route* project, namely the *Workshops* and *Live Sessions*, are also described.

These examples can serve as valuable and implementable inspiration for organizers and participants of similar events and projects in the future.

At the end of the study, an abbreviated set of good practices is included, a summary with advice for concert and cultural events organizers who would like to nurture their pro-environmental dimension and reduce their carbon footpirnt within activities they conduct.



# FESTIVAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is one of the key elements affecting the carbon footprint of an event such as a music festival. Of all the aspects that constitute a festival, it is the one responsible for the biggest  $CO_2$  emissions into the atmosphere. Therefore, if we want to talk about a *green* festival, we need to consider (and implement) solutions to reduce its carbon footprint. When analysing the components that add up to the event's carbon footprint, it is important to keep in mind the transportation of artists and participants to the festival, as well as their movement around the city during the several-day accumulation of festival activities.

#### **GETTING TO THE CITY**

One of the advantages of the *Soulstone Gathering Festival* is its location in Cracow, a a city that is an important transportation hub of Poland. This year (2023), the festival site was located very close to the *Main Railway Station* (*Kraków Główny*), one of the largest and busiest train station in Poland. The station serves several domestic and international rail directions, connecting Warsaw, Wroclaw,

#### **CARBON FOOTPRINT**

A term used to quantify the impact of an activity, person or event on climate change. It is the total sum of greenhouse gas emissions caused directly or indirectly by that activity at all stages. It is assumed to be the most adequate unit of measurement of human impact on the environment and climate change in particular.

Gdansk, Poznan and Szczecin, among others, as well as Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Berlin and other European cities. Numerous studies confirm that rail is the most environmentally friendly public transportation: per passenger, trains produce three times less carbon dioxide than cars and as much as eight times less than planes<sup>2</sup>. Not surprisingly, in the evaluation survey, many participants declared that to get to the *Soulstone Gathering Festival*, they chose to arrive by train.

Efficient and well-planned public transportation still does not cover, unfortunately, all areas of Poland. In response to these inconveniences, in a Facebook group dedicated to fans of the *Soulstone Gathering* initiative, one could observe an interesting transport phenomenon that stood in line with low-carbon strategies and the so-called *shared economy* – namely, carpooling announcements/trips. In the simplest terms, carpooling is a method of travel in which several people share a single vehicle (for example, a passenger car) to reach the same destination, in this case, a festival. Carpooling is a great way to reduce one's carbon footprint associated with travelling by car, provides savings in fuel costs and energy consumed, is also a community response to the transportation exclusion of smaller towns and cities, and finally – it opens an opportunity to make new friends among people with similar passions and interests.

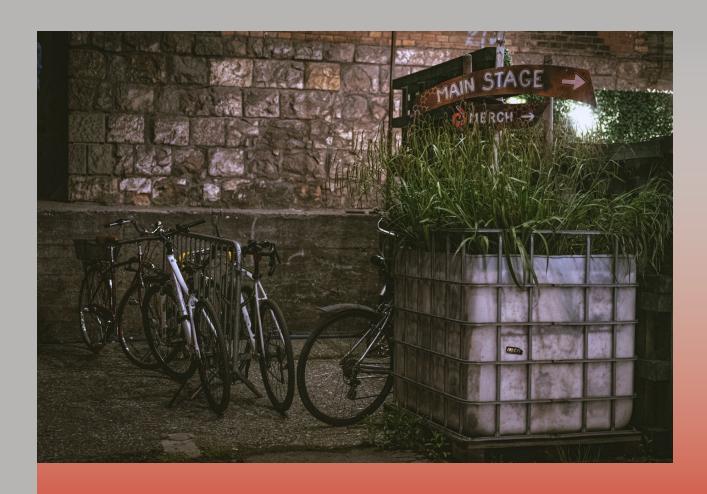
#### TRANSPORTATION WITHIN CRACOW

A vast logistical advantage of the festival was its convenient placing in the centre of the city (Cracow). The well-communicated location allowed easy access to the event using the developed public transportation network. To further encourage visitors to use public transportation, the festival website provided public transportation directions and information about the lack of car parking spaces at the festival site.

There were several ways to get to the event site that did not require a car:

- The Bishop Prandota (Biskupa Prandoty) bus stop, distanced from the event site by a 5-minute walk, is reached by 11 daytime and 2 nighttime lines; buses running in both directions of the city stop here every few minutes, even late at night;
- A nearby bus stop Freight Station (Dworzec Towarowy), from which, from which 6 popular day bus lines and one night line leave regularly;

- Located next to each other, the *Main Railway Station* (*Kraków Główny*) and the *Cracow Bus Station* (*Dworzec Autobusowy w Krakowie*) are only 1.5 kilometres from the festival site; this kind of distance is passable on foot for those travelling from further afield;
- Some festival goers and festival staff living in Cracow have chosen to come to the event by the most environmentally friendly means of transportation the bicycle (which does not produce any air polution, including geneating carbon dioxide).
- <sup>1</sup> Aeris Futuro Foundation. (2013). *Zielone Festiwale. Praktyczny poradnik* [Green Festivals. A Practical Guidel
- <sup>2</sup> European Environment Agency. (2021). Transport and environment report 2020 Train or plane? (EEA Report No 19/2020)



# SGF GOOD PRACTICES

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

location of the festival near public transport stops and interchanges

information about the lack of parking for cars

directions to buses and trams posted on the event website

shared rides – promotion of carpooling, announcements on the Facebook group, where shared-rides info is posted

possibility to fasten bicycles at the festival gate



# LANDSCAPING, LIGHTING EFFICIENCY

The festival was held at 12 Kamienna Street in Cracow, a part of a large industrial complex called *Hype Park*. This more than 100-year-old austere space of former railroad warehouses provides the perfect backdrop for a festival of heavy doom music. Interestingly, despite its austere character, the facility is full of green plants. The presence of greenery not only contributes to a welcoming atmosphere, but more importantly, it improves noise dampening

and significantly elevates air quality. Plants have the ability to absorb many chemicals harmful to health, such as nitrogen oxides, benzene and acetone<sup>3</sup>.

Many of the permanent fixtures in the Hype Park area are derived from recycled industrial materials or upcycled ones (repurposing waste into something valuable and functional), such as seatings made from pallets or lamps and pots created from empty pallet tanks (IBC Tanks). The festival grounds and food area filled with furniture made from recycled industrial items promote sustainable lifestyles and environmental awareness. inspires festival attendees to take similar actions in their daily routine, thus contributing to long-term environmental protection.



To reduce the cost to the environment of energy consumption during major events, solutions to reduce energy consumption should be actively sought. Therefore, it is worth looking into the issue of lighting at the festival site. The *chill-zone* rest area of the *SGF* could be used as an example of good practice. It was located in a large, bright tent with partially transparent walls, which allowed maximum use of daylight to illuminate the space. When it got dark outside, energy-efficient LED lights were turned on in the tent, subtly building the festival atmosphere. During the *Showcase* (the third, very sunny day of the festival), the lighting in the tent and the outdoor area was withheld from being turned on until 9 p.m., the time of sunset, which also had a positive effect on reducing electricity consumption.

<sup>3</sup> Nowak, J. (2005). *Wpływ roślin ozdobnych na zdrowie człowieka.* w: *Zeszyty problemowe postępów nauk rolniczych, 504(1)* [Effects of ornamental plants on human health. in: Study notebooks of advances in agricultural science, 504(1)]



# 56F GOOD PRACTICES

# **LANDSCAPING, LIGHTING**

functional and decorative elements (seats, flower pots) made from upcycled materials

policy of most efficient use of solar energy for lighting

use of energy-efficient light sources



#### **ZERO WASTE DECORATIONS**

Every year, an integral part of the *Soulstone Gathering Festival*, are the phenomenal and highly original decorations created by Bogna Przewozniak (*Vortex Visual Division*). The set designer works incorporating the ideas of *less waste* and *zero waste*, which was evident in the festival decorations she prepared. In an interview given for the purpose of the report, she emphasized the fact that all the decorations were recycled and that none of the decoration elements (except for mounting and multimedia) were specially purchased for the festival.

The setting of both stages, the festival gate, the portal connecting the chill-zone to the main stage, and numerous decorations on the festival grounds, were made from recycled materials obtained previously, such as stage sets, lumber, wood, and construction waste. The theme of the

main stage, its surroundings, and the *chill-zone*, was kept in natural colours – the scenery was created from recycled wood scraps and dried fragments of wood bark, and everything was transformed with the usage of visuals, light play and 3D mapping. Looking closely at the scenography, one could see reused decorations from previous editions of the festival, as well as unobvious materials used in creative ways, such as fragments of old club curtains.

#### ZERO WASTE

The idea of zero waste is based on seeing waste as a valuable resource rather than a problem. The idea is to capture the value of materials and minimize waste by reducing, reusing, repairing or recycling materials<sup>4</sup>.

To create this amazing scenography, the designer used systematically collected waste from the scenographic settings prepared for fairs, concerts and other large-scale events, which are still most often a source of a large amount of garbage.

A motto worth remembering the scenography studio *Vortex Visual Division* adheres to is: *There is no such thing as waste.* This means that with proper planning, almost everything can be reused (upcycled). Leftovers from cutting out a large decoration can be used to build another, smaller one. Everything is thought out in such a way that after dismantling it can still serve for many more events.

When asking about the waste from the decorations at the *Soulstone Gathering Festival*, the answer can only be one – there are none.

<sup>4</sup> Di Leo, S., & Salvia, M. (2017). Local strategies and action plans towards resource efficiency in South East Europe. Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews, 68, 286–305.



# 5GF GOOD PRACTICES

# ZERO WASTE DECORATIONS

effective use of a variety of elements to prepare the decorations (including ones from previous years)

zero waste philosophy and upcycling strategies dominant in thinking about the creation of festival decorations



# **CATERING**

A festival's element that has a significant environmental impact is the catering section. Due to the negative environmental impact associated with industrial meat production (which generates huge amounts of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, and also requires large amounts of water, land and feed), catering for artists and organisers was provided also in vegetarian and vegan options. Paying homage to the principles of

efficient use of resources, it was prepared by a local supplier in three options – for which seasonal vegetables and local products were used.

All food trucks invited to the festival's food zone came from Cracow and were associated with the city's typical local gastronomy. Importantly, all of them also provided at least one vegetarian option for the meal, and half of them had also a selection of vegan options. The food was served in paper packaging, and biodegradable cutlery was also available.



# 56F GOOD PRACTICES

# **CATERING**

use of biodegradable dishes and cutlery

minimising transportation, and thus CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the atmosphere, by working with local suppliers and restaurateurs



# **MERCH**

A booth with merch is an integral part of any metal festival or concert. A good practice repeated every year at the *Soulstone Gathering Festival* is to sell T-shirts and gadgets from previous editions of the event so as not to generate unnecessary trash and to act more sustainably. T-shirts from 2018 and 2019 have a collector's value for many fans of the initiative. Enthusiasts bought previously unsold items at discount prices, giving them a second life.

#### **MERCH**

Abbreviation for *merchandise*, alternatively – *products for sale*; the name for all kinds of physical products such as T-shirts, lanyards, wallets, and other small gadgets, most often branded with logos, graphics of a particular music band or festival, or graphic elements related to the band's current tour; merch is very popular and desirable among fans, builds a fan community, and provides bands with significant revenue.

# 56F GOOD PRACTICES

# **MERCH**

the *second life* of merch from previous *SGF* editions



# PROMOTION, TEAM COMMUNICATION, E-TICKETING

Based on lessons learned from previous editions (overproduction of materials), printing of posters and flyers for this year's *Soulstone Gathering Festival* was significantly reduced, driven by the desire to minimize the amount of paper generated. The axis of the festival's promotion was moved into the Internet, particularly to social media, which not only provided promotional activities with a much greater reach compared to traditional print advertising but at the same time noticeably reduced the carbon footprint of the promotional campaign, if only in terms of paper production and ink use.

The use of modern, online communication tools saves time, energy and  $\mathrm{CO}_2$  emissions associated with, for example, transportation or printing. Modern cultural projects, such as the *Soulstone Gathering Route*, are more and more often organized by people located in various remote corners of the world while working together. Emails, group chats, and online meetings have streamlined project organization and teamwork from the early stages.

The turn to digital solutions and tools could also be seen among festival guests. As in previous years, attendees were encouraged to buy festival tickets online and download them in electronic format to their phones. This reduced unnecessary paper printing and waste generation while minimizing the risk of losing the tickets.

# SGF GOOD PRACTICES

# PROMOTION, TEAM COMMUNICATION, E-TICKETING

reducing the production of printed materials, conducting promotion using the Internet and social media

broad usage of digital (remote) tools within the project team's work and communication

use of electronic festival tickets; promoting this tickets/passes variant among the audience



# WORKSHOPS

To take full advantage of the possibilities of modern technology but also, building upon the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic era, we offered a compelling content-based set of free workshops to build the competencies needed to operate freely within the music industry. Held during the summer and autumn of 2023, the lectures were conducted by renowned experts who shared their knowledge of concert organization, event promotion and financing, merchandising, and other interesting topics

that every budding artist, musician and manager should know, understand, and be able to put into practice the knowledge provided.

The Workshops were held online in real-time, with the opportunity to ask questions and comment in the chat room. Recordings of each workshop was posted on Facebook and the Soulstone Gathering project's YouTube channel so that anyone not present during the live broadcast could have easy access. The remote formula



for implementing the workshop allowed us to invite a wide variety of interesting guests. The speakers hailed from Poland as well as from abroad, the online formula did not require them to travel.

The environmental dimension of this workshop model is also worth highlighting. To give an example, the carbon footprint of one hour of a webinar involving two lecturers from Greece (as was the case during the *Touring with your band* workshop with Alex Karametis and Christos Papanantsidis) and twenty online listeners was approximately at the level between 150 g to 1 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> (the calculation includes the work of computers, the webinar server, lighting, webcams, etc.)<sup>5</sup>. If one wanted to conduct the same workshop in a physical form, in Cracow, the transportation of the lecturers alone would involve 374.80 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person if flown by air<sup>6</sup>, 45 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per person if travelled by rail<sup>7</sup> or 186 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> if travelled by car<sup>8</sup>. Online workshops are more accessible, do not require physical presence, and are a time and energy saver, so we will definitely use this type of solution for future projects.

- <sup>5</sup> FUNDACJA PAP. (2021, 23 stycznia). *Dla środowiska wyłącz kamerkę podczas spotkania https:// naukawpolsce.pl/aktualnosci/ news%2C85874%2Cdla-srodowiska-wylacz-kamerke-podczas-spotkania. html* [PAP FOUNDATION. (2021, January 23). For the environment turn off the webcam during the meeting]
- <sup>6</sup> Data based on Cracow -Thessaloniki flights. Search via https://www.virail.pl/ // accessed: 10.10.2023
- <sup>7</sup> According to information on Polish national train carrier tickets (PKP Intercity), the approximate carbon footprint of a train passenger is 3.3 kg CO<sub>2</sub> /100 km. The data is used only to estimate the real carbon footprint on the Thessaloniki Cracow route, which the Polish carrier does not operate in full. Read more: https://www.intercity.pl/pl/ekopodroz/ // accessed:10.10.2023
- 3 Assuming an average combustion of 5.8 litres of gasoline per 100 km and emissions of 2.3 kg of CO<sub>3</sub> per litre of gasoline



# 5GR GOOD PRACTICES

# **WORKSHOPS**

a significant carbon footprint reduction of activities thanks to online implementation/formula

increased circulation of pan-European knowledge, competencies and professionals – thanks to the workshops' participation of music industry professionals from different countries



#### LIVE SESSIONS

On the third day of Soulstone Gathering Festival 2023, a Showcase was held on the main stage, featuring four Polish bands (representatives of the local music scene). The opportunity to perform during the same concert night as Marc Red Sky, international stars of the stoner rock scene (the last performance of that day of the festival), was a chance for niche bands to promote themselves, especially if we also take into account the parallel recording of these performances that was done simultaneously. Each concert was professionally recorded and streamed online on the Facebook profiles of Soulstone Gathering and Knock Out Productions. The live coverage attained a very high reach, with the recording being viewed/listened to by fans from Poland, but also, according to statistics, people from the UK, Germany, Spain, Norway, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Belarus, and even the US. The recording of the concert evening, divided into individual bands' performances, was later published on the Soulstone Gathering YouTube channel<sup>o</sup>. This part of SGR activities included additional live studio sessions for bands not performing at this year's festival. These recordings were also premiered live on the Internet and the YouTube channel for further later playback. All published recordings received (and continue to receive) very positive reviews and comments.

The recording, post-production and online publication of high-quality audio-visual material of the emerging bands catalyzes promotional interest around each band, increasing the chance of new bookings and invitations. For each band, the online recording is a presentation of the repertoire to a wider audience (not just those physically present at a concert if these were

recorded live during one). The materials, once recorded, can be played anywhere in the world on any device with Internet access. This increases the accessibility of niche music without generating an unnecessary carbon footprint. New underground bands can be thus experienced and explored online.

https://youtube.com/@soulstonegathering2275



# SGF / SGR GOOD PRACTICES

# **LIVE SESSIONS**

popularising niche, emerging bands by taking advantage of Internet capabilities

reducing the carbon footprint – online access to concert performances



# WHAT DO WE WANT TO IMPROVE

During this year's edition of the *Soulstone Gathering Festival*, it was not possible to implement all the planned solutions that would reduce the project's carbon footprint. Some of the ideas had to be postponed in hopes of implementing them in the future.

The complete abandonment of single-use plastic at the festival site is one of the demands that could not be realized in this year's edition. The hosts of the venue, where the festival was held, stipulated that drinks bought at bars be

poured into plastic cups. These drinks were poured from returnable glass bottles (segregated by staff immediately after use) or from special kegs (refillable after emptying). Thus, it is clear that the potential for increasing the *greenness* of the festival exists, and it would only be necessary to optimize the full cycle of handling disposable plastic.

In the future, assuming the festival's growth, it would seem ideal to introduce the festival's own reusable bail cups, which festival attendees could return for cleaning after use or take home with them as a practical souvenir, thus ensuring circulation and reuse.

# SINGLE-USE PLASTIC DIRECTIVE

On April 14, 2023, a law was signed in Poland implementing the so-called Plastic Directive (a.k.a. SUP - Single-Use Plastic *Directive*)11, which will restrict the production and use of single-use plastic in the country from January 2024. Among other things, the new legislation obliges all catering establishments to provide customers with reusable packaging or packaging made of materials other than plastic<sup>12</sup>.

Directive of the European Parliament and Council (EU) 2019/904 of June 5, 2019 on reducing the environmental impact of certain plastic products

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> (Polish) Law of April 14, 2023, amending the law on the obligations of entrepreneurs on the management of certain wastes and the product fee, as well as certain other laws (Journal of Laws 2023 item 877)



# TOOLBOX FOR IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES

1.

#### **ACT LOCALLY**

Local bands, stage, suppliers, catering – this principle has been the dominant rule in the DIY scene, and is also a simple and very effective solution to reduce the environmental emissions of an event, which further builds and strengthens the (local) community.

2.

# CONVENIENTLY-CONNECTED LOCATION

Ease of access by public transportation or alternative means to the event increases its attractiveness, accessibility and low carbon footprint; information about nearby bus stops, tram stops, train stations, or bicycle paths should additionally be provided to event participants in a simple and clear manner.

3.

#### **ONLINE EVENTS**

The Covid-19 pandemic effectively taught how to communicate remotely via the Internet; meetings, speakers and workshops, as well as concert streams hosted online, are inclusive, accessible to a wide audience, increase outreach, and further reduce the need to use transportation, which in the concert and meeting industries generates the biggest harmful carbon footprint.

4.

#### **VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN FRIENDLY**

It's a good idea for the food offerings or catering at an event to include meals without meat and with plant-based substitutes for zoonotic products; a plant-based diet is the most environmentally friendly.

5.

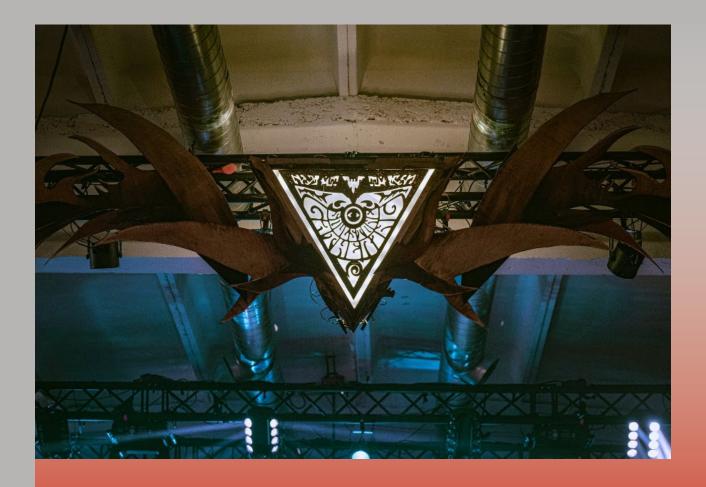
#### **LESS WASTE PHILOSOPHY**

Following the *reduce, reuse, recycle* motto, the key is to identify spaces where waste generation can be reduced. A variety of ways can be used – minimise the production of new promotional materials using those from previous years, use the materials, physical objects and tools in a different, unconventional way (such as creating environmentally friendly decorations or a rest area), and finally, make sure they are suitable for further use or recycled.

6.

# CONSECUTIVE STEPS METHOD (WORK WHERE YOU CAN)

It is extremely rare to implement all the planned proenvironmental solutions in an event at once; one needs to reliably assess one's own possibilities, making even small changes where they are achievable; conscious and consistent actions within each consecutive edition will ensure the desired progression.



TEXT: Julia Szymborska, Krzysztof Bober

EDITING AND TRANSLATION: Krzysztof Bober

PHOTOGRAPHY: Justyna Kamińska, Daria Bokowy

**COORDINATION AND PUBLICATION: Soulstone Gathering Foundation** 

The publication was created as part of the project *Soulstone Gathering Route – toolset of activities for a fairer* and more professional independent rock music market co-funded by the European Union.

The views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, for which the European Union cannot be held responsible for them.







