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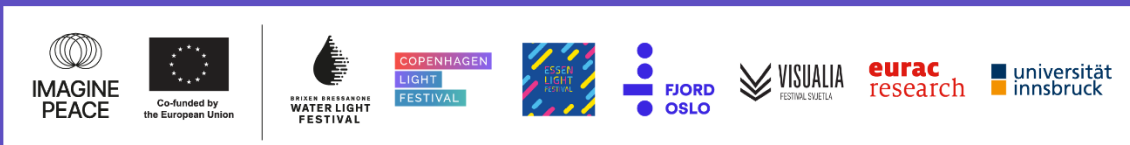


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Sustainability at Visualia Festival of Light

an Imagine Peace Sustainability Report

September 2025



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1. Introduction

Visualia Festival of Light is Croatia's first festival of light and one of the region's most distinctive cultural events. Since its inception in 2013, the festival has steadily expanded in scope and visibility, transforming the historic city of Pula into a luminous stage for audiovisual art and technological innovation. Now in its 11th edition, Visualia continues to attract thousands of visitors with immersive light installations, large-scale projections, and interactive experiences that celebrate creativity, community, and the transformative power of light.

Held annually in mid-September, the festival spans multiple locations across the city centre, offering a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere for audiences of all ages. Signature features such as the illuminated 'Lighting Giants' of the Uljanik Shipyard, the night race 'Xica' and the Giant of Light 'Dundu' underscore the festival blend of art, heritage and public engagement. As a member of the ILO (International Light Festivals Organisation), the festival fosters also international collaboration and knowledge exchange among light professionals and artists.

In 2025, Visualia deepened its commitment to sustainability and stakeholder engagement through its participation in the Imagine Peace project, which involves the performing of a sustainability audit based upon multiple guidelines to assess sustainability under economic, social and environmental points of view. The audit also consisted of a public questionnaire to collect the insights from the visitors and add an additional perspective to the audit. The questionnaire was distributed during and shortly after the festival (September 11–20), gathering 408 responses—279 fully completed and 365 usable. Promotion of the survey was carried out via QR codes on flyers which were distributed at three key festival locations as well as through targeted social media campaigns.

Building on the data collected through the public questionnaire and the insights shared by the festival organisers and the audit committee members, a structured audit was carried out on November 14th, 2025 to discuss the festival's sustainability performance. The audit followed the Imagine Peace guidelines, which evaluate sustainability across three dimensions: management, processes, and results. The evaluation of the "results" section was primarily informed by the questionnaire responses and was further enriched through a collaborative review process.

The audit consisted of a half-day online workshop with the scientific partners, the Visualia team, the partner association Water Light Festival Brixen and a local stakeholder. Each guideline was discussed individually to ensure a comprehensive and well-informed assessment. Points were assigned based on the available evidence and stakeholder input, resulting in a detailed evaluation of the festival's alignment with ecological, social, and organisational sustainability goals. The following report presents the outcomes of this process¹.

¹ This document is a report in line with the expected deliverables listed in Work Package 3 – Sustainability of the Imagine Peace project: <https://imaginepeaceproject.eu/>.

2. Economic Sustainability



	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	C 1.1.	4	4	16
	Stakeholder Involvement	C 1.2.	3	2	6
	Financial Planning	C 1.3.	3	1	3
	Risk Assessment	C 1.4.	1	2	2
	Employee Wellbeing	C 1.5.	4	2	8
	Workforce Management	C 1.6.	2	2	4
	Knowledge Management	C 1.7.	3	2	6
	Total Management				45/80 (56%)
Processes	Financial Flows	C 2.1.	4	4	16
	Knowledge Capture	C 2.2.	2	3	6
	Quality Controls	C 2.3.	3	2	6
	Public Relations Strategy	C 2.4.	4	2	8
	Supplier Reliability	C 2.5.	3	2	6
	Dealing with Complaints	C 2.6.	1	2	2
	Total Processes				44/68 (65%)
Results	Festival Continuity	C 3.1.	3	4	12
	Economic and Tourism Value	C 3.2.	4	2	8
	Sponsoring	C 3.3.	3	0	0
	Perceived Communication	C 3.4.	2	4	8
	Complaints	C 3.5.	1	2	2
	Total Results				30/52 (58%)
	Total				119/200 (59,5%)

Table 1: Overview of the Economic Sustainability Guidelines

2.1. Assessment Level: Management

2.1.1. Selection of Installations (C 1.1.)

The festival's selection process for installations is carried out professionally and results in a high-quality, diverse programme. The artistic concepts are strong and well aligned with the festival's mission, with several installations attracting significant visitor interest, an indicator of quality. The curators manage the balance between artistic ambition and general audience expectations thoughtfully, even if this can be challenging at times.

Technical feasibility is well ensured. Auditors reported no major issues, with installations generally stable throughout the festival. Some minor issues at the beginning of the festival were noted, with some installations not working as expected. Nonetheless these issues were promptly resolved.

The organisers also maintain reliable relationships with artists. They prefer working with cooperative and experienced professionals and have refined selection practices based on past experiences. Although limited budgets restrict their ability to visit artists and their planned installation in advance, the team still manages these partnerships efficiently.

Financial considerations are part of the selection process, though cost control can be challenging, as the organisers tend to invest generously to maintain artistic and technical standards. Despite this, the overall approach remains focused on ensuring feasibility without compromising quality.

Overall, the audit confirms a solid and well-structured selection process, characterized by strong artistic choices, dependable technical execution, good artist collaboration, and continued attention to financial feasibility.

2.1.2. Stakeholder Involvement (C 1.2.)

The festival collaborates with a small but targeted group of external stakeholders whose roles primarily support the organisational framework rather than the financial side of the event. Kaštel and the Historical & Maritime Museum of Istria, as well as the Archaeological Museum of Istria, are partners, although they do not contribute to the festival's budget. Their involvement mainly facilitates access to locations and cultural infrastructure.

The City of Pula plays a central role, especially in handling permits and administrative procedures, making it one of the most important institutional actors in the overall organisation. The Tourism Office of Pula serves as a co-organiser, providing additional institutional backing and visibility. At a broader level, the Region of Istria and the Regional Tourism Office act as patrons of the festival, offering formal support and recognition.

Stakeholder engagement remains largely informal, with communication often carried out through direct exchanges rather than structured meetings. This streamlined approach helps the organisers navigate bureaucratic requirements more efficiently and maintains flexibility. Although the number of involved partners is intentionally kept limited, each contributes relevant support within their respective capacities, forming a functional network around the festival.

2.1.3. Financial Planning (C 1.3.)

As for the financial planning, the festival has basic processes in place, with a clear understanding of overall expected income and main cost categories. However, this year's experience highlighted the need for a more structured and comprehensive financial approach. The organisers focused strongly on the artistic dimension, resulting in more installations but a tighter budget, and ultimately exceeding planned expenses.

While some foundational financial data exists, the audit revealed gaps, particularly in areas such as risk planning and provisions for unexpected costs. The team acknowledged that financial planning needs to be strengthened in future editions to ensure greater stability and balance between artistic ambition and financial feasibility. Despite these challenges, the organisers are aware of their financial flows, and the audit served as a useful reminder of the importance of more detailed and systematic budgeting.

2.1.4. Risk Assessment (C 1.4.)

The festival demonstrates several practices to reduce risks during installation, setup, and operation. The team is aware of typical hazards and monitors potential issues on site. Based on their experience, the organisers are aware of what could go wrong during the festival and are ready to address emerging problems promptly. The team documents site-specific conditions, such as uneven ground or obstacles, so that artists can prepare accordingly. Technical feasibility is also informally checked, and issues that arise, such as occasional installation troubles, are resolved through on-site intervention.

Continuous security is in place, namely guards are present 24 hours at all locations on the days of the festival. This measure also helps prevent vandalism or theft. The team has therefore a basic security structure that supports preventive risk management.

Some important components of formal risk management, however, are not yet established. The festival does not conduct or document a formal risk assessment, and there is currently no liability insurance at organiser's level. While artists are expected to manage their own professional responsibilities, there are no formal agreements in place to ensure that artists carry professional liability insurance. The team notes that limited organisational capacity and legal support make formal contracting challenging. Overall, the festival addresses several practical risk-related measures through on-site management and continuous monitoring but lacks formalised processes and insurance components that would strengthen the overall risk management framework.

2.1.5. Employee Wellbeing (C 1.5.)

The festival is organised by a small core team within the association, supported by external rental companies when needed. Although team members work across multiple projects beyond the festival, the internal working atmosphere is described as very positive. According to the organisers, collaboration within the team is smooth, discussions are open, and new ideas are encouraged. Team members feel supported, and the environment is characterized by trust and good communication.

However, staff development and retention rely largely on informal learning and practical experience. New team members acquire knowledge by observing and gradually taking on tasks, rather than through structured workflows or documented processes. While this approach works well within a small and motivated team, it leaves gaps in ensuring long-term knowledge preservation and continuity.

Overall, the festival benefits from strong team cohesion and a supportive working atmosphere, but formal retention and knowledge-preservation measures are still limited.

2.1.6. Workforce Management (C 1.6.)

Workforce management for the festival benefits from a committed and collaborative team. According to the organisers, the working atmosphere is friendly, communication is open, and team members support each other even during demanding periods. To facilitate internal communication and maintain a positive working climate, the team also took part in coaching sessions.

Despite this strong interpersonal foundation, the workload during the festival days is high, and stress levels increase for the core team. While the festival is successfully held each year, the comments suggest that the current workforce setup places considerable pressure on the small group of organisers, and additional personnel or a more systematic allocation of tasks could ease this burden.

Overall, workforce management allows the festival to function effectively, supported by a motivated team and good internal communication. However, the reliance on a small group and the high workload during peak periods indicate that staffing could be strengthened to further improve efficiency and reduce stress.

2.1.7. Knowledge Management (C 1.7.)

Knowledge within the festival team is shared openly, and communication among team members functions well. When the main producer left, the transition was smooth because another coworker was already familiar with many aspects of the work and could step in without major disruption. Team

members describe an environment where everyone can contribute across different tasks, and knowledge is exchanged informally through constant communication and collaboration. Each person has specific expertise, but they rely on one another and share insights as needed. However, this exchange remains informal and is not supported by a structured knowledge management system. Processes, best practices, and organisational insights are not systematically documented or stored, meaning that knowledge remains largely person-dependent. While internal knowledge sharing works effectively within the small team, there is no indication of broader or formalised knowledge exchange with similar organisations.

Overall, the festival benefits from strong internal communication and flexible knowledge sharing among team members but lacks formal mechanisms for documentation and structured knowledge management, both internally and externally.

2.2. Assessment Level: Processes

2.2.1. Financial Flows (C 2.1.)

Financial flows within the festival are documented and systematically tracked. According to the organisers, all incoming and outgoing invoices are recorded, and a clear overview of planned expenditures and required payments is maintained. Regular reporting to public bodies, such as the city, the ministry of tourism, and the tourism office, further reinforces transparency and ensures that financial information is consistently reviewed.

Financial planning could be improved, especially in terms of anticipating needs and structuring the process more effectively. The team does not experience issues with missing payments or untracked expenses, indicating that financial flows are monitored across multiple categories and managed in an organised manner.

2.2.2. Knowledge Capture (C 2.2.)

The festival team engages in several forms of knowledge capture across the different phases of the event. Before the festival, the organisers prepare and review informally what did not work in previous editions and use these insights to improve planning for the upcoming year. During the festival, real-time communication is strong: the team maintains an active communication group, responds quickly to emerging issues, and shares information continuously to keep operations running smoothly. After the festival, the team reflects on weaknesses, ensuring that recurring problems are addressed. However, these processes rely on informal coordination rather than a dedicated manager or a structured, centralized system for knowledge capture.

Overall, the festival demonstrates effective preparation, active knowledge exchange during the event, and post-festival reflection, but lacks a formalised system or dedicated role to systematically archive and manage this knowledge.

2.2.3. Quality Controls (C 2.3.)

The festival ensures basic quality control through regular location checks and by resolving technical issues in the days close to the opening ceremony. Auditors noted that installations generally worked well during the festival in 2025 and no major problems were observed. However, the process is not fully formalised: there are no structured site visits with artists or systematic rehearsals, and final adjustments are often made shortly before the festival begins.

2.2.4. Public Relations Strategy (C 2.4.)

The festival has made clear progress in its public relations strategy by shifting from costly traditional advertising toward more targeted and creative communication efforts. With limited financial resources, the team focused strongly on social media, digital advertising, and collaborations with media partners. Interviews, coordinated posts, and increased online visibility have become central tools, reflecting a more professional and efficient use of available channels.

Printed materials are still part of the mix, but in reduced and more purposeful quantities. Instead of large banner campaigns or extensive posters, which previously consumed a major share of the budget, the festival now concentrates on selected placements and manageable flyer distribution. Despite a reduction in the number of total flyers printed, a large amount was left undistributed this year. The audit shows that festival awareness is generally good during the festival period, and recent adjustments have strengthened visibility. At the same time, the team remains aware that some audiences still lack prior knowledge of the event, indicating room for broader outreach and more detailed information in future editions.

2.2.5. Supplier Reliability (C 2.5.)

The festival has established reliable and responsive partnerships with its key suppliers, particularly in technical and logistical areas. These relationships are characterized by clear communication and a strong ability to handle challenges quickly. As highlighted in the audit, the collaborating companies can resolve issues even at very short notice, which significantly enhances operational stability.

This support structure ensures that potential disruptions can be mitigated effectively, contributing to the smooth execution of the event. The festival's approach reflects a solid foundation of trust and professionalism in its supplier network, strengthening overall resilience and ensuring continuity throughout the festival.

2.2.6. Dealing with Complaints (C 2.6.)

The festival maintains an open and responsive approach to handling visitor feedback and complaints. Input is often received directly and informally, with team members noting that visitors frequently share precise comments or opinions on the spot. When individuals reach out through other channels, the team makes sure to respond and address concerns.

During the festival itself, the fast-paced environment can lead to some delays, but the intention to reply and resolve issues remains consistent. This responsiveness shows that the team values visitor input and treats feedback as an important part of the festival experience. Overall, the approach reflects a commitment to listening to visitors and addressing concerns, even if processes are not yet fully formalised.

2.3. Assessment Level: Results

2.3.1. Festival Continuity (C 3.1.)

The survey data indicates strong continuity of the festival and its capacity to sustain and expand a loyal visitor base. A large majority of respondents (75%) reported having visited past editions, demonstrating a solid foundation of returning attendees. This suggests that the festival has successfully built a consistent audience over time.

Even more importantly, intentions to revisit the festival are very high. Importantly, intentions to revisit the festival remain strong: 81% of respondents expressed willingness to attend the next edition, while only a small minority indicated they would not. This is a strong indicator of the festival's continuity. The additional 15% who are undecided represent further potential, as they have not ruled out returning. These results highlight both sustained loyalty and positive prospects for continued growth.

2.3.2. Economic and Tourism Value (C 3.2.)

The festival demonstrates meaningful tourism and economic impact on the destination. Survey data shows that a considerable share of visitors (31%) traveled primarily to attend the event. This indicates that the festival acts as a strong motivator for travel rather than merely an add-on to an existing trip. Among those who came specifically for the festival, nearly half (48%) stayed overnight, generating additional value for local accommodation providers and related services. Although the proportion of overnight stays falls just below the halfway mark, it still reflects a solid contribution to the destination's off-season tourism activity.

Visitors' perceptions of the festival's economic and tourism value were more moderate, with an average rating of 4.27 on the 0–10-point scale. While this suggests that visitors do not yet fully associate the festival with high economic impact, it also highlights an opportunity to communicate the festival's broader value more effectively.

Overall, the data shows that the festival succeeds in attracting dedicated travelers and contributes to the local tourism economy.

2.3.3. Sponsoring (C 3.3.)

The festival has established a small group of sponsors, with each year around four to five sponsors involved. Their support is mainly provided through non-financial contributions, such as discounted hotel services, rather than direct funding. This indicates that sponsorships are present but currently limited in scope. The existing arrangements offer some practical benefits for the festival, even though they do not represent a significant financial share of the overall budget.

2.3.4. Perceived Communication (C 3.4.)

The survey results indicate that participants were generally satisfied with the communication provided before and during the festival. The average satisfaction with communication before the festival was 4.20 and for communication during the event was 4.26. At the same time, the relevance of communication was rated at similar levels, with average importance scores of 4.34 for both phases.

These results show a consistent alignment between what participants consider important and how they evaluated their experience. Most respondents used common channels such as the official website, social media, printed materials, or personal recommendations to obtain information, reflecting a mix of communication touchpoints.

Overall, the data suggests that communication met participants' expectations in areas they considered important, based on the combination of high satisfaction and high relevance scores.

2.3.5. Complaints (C 3.5.)

The survey results show that participants generally felt their feedback or complaints were taken into consideration to some extent. The average rating for feedback consideration was 3.77 on a 5-point Likert scale. More than 5% of respondents indicated that they had submitted feedback, so the assessment is based directly on how participants rated the handling of feedback rather than on the absence of submissions.

Overall enjoyment of the festival also reached a high average rating, indicating that most participants were satisfied with their experience. Taken together, the results suggest that attendees who provided feedback felt it was acknowledged at a medium to higher level, while overall satisfaction with the festival remained strong.

3. Social Sustainability



	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	S 1.1.	4	2	8
	Collaboration with Schools and Associations	S 1.2.	3	0	0
	Social Inclusion	S 1.3.	3	2	6
	Family Concept	S 1.4.	4	2	8
	Conflict Management (Residents)	S 1.5.	3	1	3
	Gender Concept	S 1.6.	1	2	2
	Employee Training	S 1.7.	2	4	8
	Total Management				
Processes	Noise Reduction	S 2.1.	2	2	4
	Light Pollution	S 2.2.	4	0	0
	Accessible Communication	S 2.3.	4	2	8
	Safety Measures	S 2.4.	2	4	8
	Active Participation	S 2.5.	3	4	12
	Parking	S 2.6.	1	2	2
	Total Processes				
Results	Light and Noise Disturbance	S 3.1.	4	2	8
	Traffic Disturbance	S 3.2.	2	2	4
	Cross-Generational Inclusiveness	S 3.3.	3	2	6
	Participants with Disabilities	S 3.4.	1	2	2
	Consideration of Local Needs	S 3.5.	3	4	12
	Total Results				
Total					101/200 (50,5%)

Table 2: Overview of the Social Sustainability Guidelines

3.1. Assessment Level: Management

3.1.1. Selection of Installations (S 1.1.)

Based on the audit, some social aspects are implemented while others remain challenging. Inclusive and participative installations are valued by the team, as its aims at integrating interactive works that engage visitors, although this is not always easy to achieve. Gender balance is not actively addressed in the selection process, as the team focuses primarily on artistic quality rather than the background of the artists.

Involving local artists is described as difficult. According to the organisers, many local creators are small-scale or less experienced, which means that working with them requires significantly more time and guidance. In contrast, international cultural exchange is consistently present, as the festival includes artists from various countries.

3.1.2. Collaborations with Schools and Associations (S 1.2.)

During the edition 2025, collaborations with local organisations, schools, or youth groups were limited. While these forms of engagement were more prominent in the past, particularly through workshops connected to the festival's educational platform on video mapping, which involved many students, such activities did not play a significant role this year.

3.1.3. Social Inclusion (S 1.3.)

Physical accessibility is considered by the team mainly through the existing infrastructure of the public spaces where the installations are located. When selecting installations, the team considers whether people with disabilities can reach the locations, and in most cases the surrounding infrastructure already provides basic accessibility. However, there is no budget available to implement more comprehensive measures (e.g., sensory impairment), and efforts beyond physical access are not currently developed.

3.1.4. Family Concept (S 1.4.)

The audit revealed that family-related aspects play a significant role for the festival, as families make up a large share of the audience. Some installations were considered kid-friendly, offering opportunities for younger visitors to engage with the event. In addition, a children's park was provided, although it was noted that this area was not strongly connected to the festival's theme and required resources to organise.

There were also some practical issues, such as a company bringing a bouncy castle on the first night but failing to illuminate it, which reduced its usability. This was highlighted as an aspect that may need reconsideration. Overall, family-oriented elements were present, but not yet fully integrated into the broader festival concept.

3.1.5. Conflict Management (Residents) (S 1.5.)

As for the management of conflicts, the festival handles comments and concerns from residents in an informal manner. Feedback is often received directly, and the team responds when people reach out. However, during the festival, the fast-paced environment can lead to delays in responding. There is no indication of a structured conflict or complaint management system with defined responsibilities or formal communication procedures for residents. The current approach is reactive and based on handling issues as they arise.

3.1.6. Gender Concept (S 1.6.)

The audit reveals that the festival does not work with a defined gender concept. Inclusive language is not a topic the team actively discusses. It was also noted that this aspect is generally less present in the local context. The organisers do not focus on gender-related considerations in their processes, although they also indicated that they do not act in a disrespectful manner. No structured measures or principles related to gender equality or representation were mentioned.

3.1.7. Employee Training (S 1.7.)

The audit indicates that there is some level of knowledge exchange with other festivals, including the Imagine Peace and ILO networks. Within the team, roles are flexible, and members can adapt to different tasks as needed, which the organisers described as typical for their smaller team structure. This approach appears to function well for the festival. At the same time, there is one main technical director overseeing technical aspects. It was noted that some installations were switched on later than planned, suggesting that training or coordination in certain operational areas could be improved.

3.2. Assessment Level: Processes

3.2.1. Noise Reduction (S 2.1.)

According to the organisers, noise levels are monitored and adjustments are made, when necessary. Noise issues arise mainly with video mapping installations that use louder music. The team reduces volume earlier in the evening when possible, especially if fewer visitors are present, even though they are officially allowed to play sound until midnight. This indicates that some noise reduction measures are applied in response to recurring situations, particularly to limit prolonged exposure to the same audio. No additional proactive communication or broader measures were mentioned.

3.2.2. Light Pollution (S 2.2.)

The audit shows that the festival applies some measures to limit light pollution. The organisers request the city to switch off public lighting in areas where installations are placed, and they avoid certain types of installations, such as light beams directed into the sky, that could create stronger light impacts. These decisions are part of the precautionary approach when assessing installations. No additional communication measures toward residents or visitors were mentioned, and there is no broader awareness campaign related to light impact or energy use.

3.2.3. Accessible Communication (S 2.3.)

Visualia ensures accessible communication by sharing information through multiple channels, allowing diverse audiences to easily access festival details. The festival makes some effort to use plain language in its communication. Beyond this, no additional measures for accessible communication were mentioned, and there is no broader strategy in place to make information more inclusive for people with disabilities.

3.2.4. Safety Measures (S 2.4.)

The festival relies primarily on the standard safety rules and infrastructure already in place in the public spaces where it is organised. The team ensures that enough space is left for emergency vehicles and follows the required regulations, but no additional safety planning or special preparations are carried

out. The organisers stated that they know how to respond if something occurs, yet formal measures such as technical checks or dedicated security arrangements are not part of the current approach. Security personnel are present at each installation.

3.2.5. Active Participation (S 2.5.)

The festival places importance on activating the audience, and interactive installations are a recurring element of the programme. The team explained that they always include some opportunities for visitors to engage directly with the installations and are considering expanding these participatory elements in the future.

3.2.6. Parking (S 2.6.)

Parking is managed entirely through the existing infrastructure, as no additional solutions were introduced by the organisers. Most visitors are local and often arrive by car, while the limited public transport options, especially the absence of night buses, create further challenges. The team does not provide specific information on where to park or how to reach the festival by bike or on foot, and they avoid promoting public transport to prevent negative comments on their channels.

3.3. Assessment Level: Results

3.3.1. Light and Noise Disturbance (S 3.1.)

The survey responses indicate that residents perceive a moderate level of additional light and noise during the festival period. The average rating for additional light pollution was 2.42, while additional noise was rated at 2.25 on the 5-point Likert scale. These values suggest that the impacts are noticeable but remain within a medium range compared to normal street lighting and everyday noise levels. The results show that the festival creates some extra disturbance, but not at a high or severe level.

3.3.2. Traffic Disturbance (S 3.2.)

The survey results reveal that participants perceived a noticeable increase in traffic during the festival, with an average rating of 3.29 on the 5-point scale. This indicates that traffic levels were viewed as higher than usual. At the same time, satisfaction with parking options was relatively positive, with an average rating of 3.78. These results suggest that while traffic was experienced as somewhat heavier, parking availability and organisation were generally seen as adequate by respondents.

3.3.3. Cross-Generational Inclusiveness (S 3.3.)

The survey shows that 16.85% of respondents belonged to the younger (up to 25) or older (65+) age groups. This indicates that both groups were represented to a moderate extent among festival visitors. In terms of initiatives, the festival offered some elements for children, providing opportunities for younger audiences to engage with the event. No specific measures targeting older adults were mentioned. Overall, the data reflects a certain level of cross-generational participation, supported mainly through activities for younger visitors.

3.3.4. Participants with Disabilities (S 3.4.)

Survey responses indicate that participants generally viewed the festival as reasonably accessible for people with disabilities. The perceived inclusion of people with disabilities received an average rating of 3.68, while the accessibility of installations scored 4.06. Together, these values result in a combined average of 3.87 on the 5-point scale. This suggests that respondents considered both inclusion and physical accessibility to be at a discrete to good level.

3.3.5. Consideration of Local Needs (S 3.5.)

Survey participants rated the festival's consideration of local interests at an average of 4.08 on the 5-point scale, meaning that they perceived a high level of attention to local needs. At the same time, the perceived disturbance to residents was relatively low, with an average score of 2.40. Together, these results suggest that visitors felt the festival was organised with awareness of the local community and that its impact on everyday life was limited.

4. Ecological Sustainability



	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	E 1.1.	4	2	8
	Environment Management	E 1.2.	3	1	3
	Waste Prevention	E 1.3.	1	1	1
	Energy Saving Plan	E 1.4.	2	1	2
	Cooperation with Environmental Organisations	E 1.5.	3	2	6
	Life Cycle Assessment	E 1.6.	3	2	6
	Environmental Awareness	E 1.7.	4	0	0
	Total Management				
Processes	Energy Saving Measures	E 2.1.	3	2	6
	Wildlife Impact Measures	E 2.2.	1	0	0
	Public Transportation Support Measures	E 2.3.	2	2	4
	Environmentally Sustainable Printing	E 2.4.	3	2	6
	Environmentally Sustainable Resources	E 2.5.	4	3	12
	Technical Quality Controls	E 2.6.	4	2	8
	Total Processes				
Results	Energy Consumption	E 3.1.	4	4	16
	Energy Savings	E 3.2.	3	2	6
	Energy from Renewable Sources	E 3.3.	2	0	0
	Waste Generation	E 3.4.	1	2	2
	Sustainable Transportation	E 3.5.	3	3	9
	Total Results				
Total					95/200 (47,5%)

Table 3: Overview of the Ecological Sustainability Guidelines

4.1. Assessment Level: Management

4.1.1. Selection of Installations (E 1.1.)

The festival incorporates several ecological considerations into its selection and production processes, although in a more limited and pragmatic way. The team pays attention to the energy requirements of the installations and has the impression that most artworks operate with relatively low consumption. Transport-related impacts are also considered: in several cases, installations are presented without requiring the artists to travel to Pula, and some works are shipped by train when feasible, reducing the environmental footprint associated with transport.

Other ecological aspects are not currently integrated into the selection framework.

Overall, the festival shows awareness of a few key ecological factors, particularly energy use and travel arrangements, and incorporates them when possible. These efforts represent initial steps toward aligning artistic production with environmental considerations, even though a more comprehensive ecological approach has not yet been established.

4.1.2. Environmental Management (E 1.2.)

The festival does not have an environmental management plan. During the audit, the team explained that they rely on the city's existing plans rather than implementing dedicated measures. A sustainability manifesto exists and has been signed, but the team noted that they are not familiar with its contents and do not use it as an operational tool. No environmental officer, wildlife-related guidelines, consultations with environmental organisations, or documented procedures were mentioned. Overall, the current approach reflects the presence of a general sustainability commitment through the manifesto, but without a structured or actively implemented environmental management framework.

4.1.3. Waste Prevention (E 1.3.)

Waste prevention is not managed through a dedicated plan at the festival. According to the audit, waste management largely follows the municipality's existing system, and no separate prevention strategy has been developed by the organisers. The team mentioned that they try to avoid generating unnecessary waste, but also noted practical challenges, for example, flyers can easily end up discarded, and bringing back plastic light objects is planned due to audience demand.

Since the festival does not offer food or beverages, the amount of waste generated on-site is relatively limited, and private garbage bins are used. However, no specific measures such as structured waste reduction strategies, waste separation, or proactive communication on responsible disposal were reported. The current approach relies mainly on the municipal plan and informal efforts to keep waste generation low.

4.1.4. Energy-Saving Plan (E 1.4.)

No structured energy-saving plan is in place for the festival. The organisers face limitations because the city does not provide options for renewable energy, making it difficult to implement stronger energy-reduction measures. Beyond this constraint, no additional strategies, such as efficiency measures, reduction linked to installation design, avoidance, or compensation, were mentioned. The current situation reflects an absence of dedicated energy-saving measures beyond operating within the limitations of the existing municipal energy infrastructure.

4.1.5. Cooperation with Environmental Organisations (E 1.5.)

The festival maintains some cooperation with an environmental organisation in Istria, particularly regarding the health of trees and related environmental considerations. The organisers explained that they receive input from this organisation and implement some of its recommendations, though not as extensively as they would or could. This indicates that consultation does take place, but the integration of advice into festival planning remains partial rather than comprehensive.

4.1.6. Life Cycle Assessment (E 1.6.)

The festival does not carry out a formal life cycle assessment. However, some decisions made by the organisers reflect an awareness of lifecycle-related impacts. Visualia does not commission new installations but instead presents works that are already touring, avoiding the creation of artworks that would later need to be stored or discarded. The technical equipment purchased for the festival is reused as much as possible. These practices relate to aspects of material use and longevity, but they do not constitute a structured or partial LCA. No assessments of energy consumption, travel, or other measurable factors were mentioned.

4.1.7. Environmental Awareness (E 1.7.)

Environmental awareness is not a strong focus in the festival's current communication, although some individual installations include relevant themes. The organisers mentioned that certain artworks have environmental aspects and that past editions have featured artworks with such messages. However, the audit also highlighted that these themes are not consistently communicated to visitors. Information at the installations is limited, and clearer explanations or markings on-site are still under development. Team members noted that some works, such as the guardian angel installation, contained an environmental story, but this was mainly communicated by the artist rather than integrated into the festival's own communication. It was also expressed that not every event or artwork needs an environmental component. Overall, there are occasional elements that touch on environmental awareness, but no systematic approach or clear strategy is currently in place.

4.2. Assessment Level: Processes

4.2.1. Energy-Saving Measures (E 2.1.)

Two of the energy-saving aspects listed in the guideline are currently being practiced at the festival. The organisers focus on using energy-efficient installations, noting that most artworks already rely on LED technology and therefore operate at relatively low consumption levels. In addition, public lighting in certain areas is switched off to compensate for the festival's energy use when possible.

No measures were mentioned regarding encouraging local stakeholders to adopt energy-saving practices or implementing innovative solutions to balance sustainability with the festival's growth. The existing efforts therefore relate specifically to optimising installation efficiency and reducing other lighting in the festival area.

4.2.2. Wildlife Impact Measures (E 2.2.)

No wildlife-related measures are currently implemented. During the audit, it was noted that the city inquired about increasing light impacts on trees, but no steps are taken to address or reduce potential effects on local wildlife. There are no selection criteria, guidelines for artists, or planning measures in place that focus on environmentally sensitive practices such as avoiding disruptive light tones. No consultation with environmental organisations was mentioned in relation to wildlife protection.

4.2.3. Public Transportation Support Measures (E 2.3.)

Public transportation is not actively promoted for visitors. According to the organisers, the only measure in place is the provision of public transport cards for artists staying outside the city centre. No broader efforts, such as encouraging attendees to use public transport, improving connections, or offering additional services, are implemented. The organisers explained that, given the festival's small scale and being the majority of the festival attendees residents, they do not consider themselves at the point where such promotion is necessary.

4.2.4. Environmentally Sustainable Printing (E 2.4.)

Printed materials have been significantly reduced, as the organisers stopped producing most offline promotional items. Apart from this reduction, no specific environmentally sustainable printing measures were mentioned, such as the use of recycled paper or eco-friendly printing standards. Materials are therefore limited mainly through non-production rather than through targeted sustainability practices in printing.

4.2.5. Environmentally Sustainable Resources (E 2.5.)

Several of the resource-related aspects mentioned in the guideline are reflected in the festival's current practices. The organisers reuse technical equipment from one year to the next whenever possible, and they source equipment locally to limit transport distances. They also try to minimize travel connected to the installations. Decorative elements are kept to a minimum, as even signage at the installations is largely avoided.

No specific reference was made to circular economy principles beyond these practical measures, but the practices described, reusability, reduced transport, and limited decoration, align with part of the guideline's intentions.

4.2.6. Technical Quality Controls (E 2.6.)

Technical quality controls are carried out, but they remain basic. The team stated that they do check the equipment and make fixes when possible. At the same time, they acknowledged that there is room for improvement in these procedures. No indication was given of more extensive or systematic checks involving both the technical team and artists.

4.3. Assessment Level: Results

4.3.1. Energy Consumption (E 3.1.)

The festival monitors the energy demand of its installations and reports that most of them operate at around 1–2 kW. This places the energy consumption well within the lower range defined in the guideline. No additional details were provided about broader energy management or tracking systems, but the reported consumption levels indicate that the installations generally require relatively little power.

4.3.2. Energy Savings (E 3.2.)

Survey participants rated the additional energy consumption of the installations at an average of 3.01, indicating a medium perception of extra energy use. At the same time, the ecological sustainability of the installations received a higher average rating of 4.26. This combination suggests that while visitors do not perceive the installations as extremely energy-efficient, they still view them as ecologically sustainable overall.

4.3.3. Energy from Renewable Sources² (E 3.3.)

No renewable energy is used for the festival. According to the team, the electricity provided is not sourced from renewable energy, and there are currently no measures in place to increase the share of renewable energy in the festival's power supply.

4.3.4. Waste Generation (E 3.4.)

Survey responses indicate that participants perceived the festival's waste-related impact to be moderate. The average rating for additional waste production was 2.27, while city cleanliness was rated at 2.05 on the 5-point scale. These values suggest that respondents noticed some extra waste and minor effects on cleanliness, but not at a high level. Overall, the perceived disturbance remains within a medium range.

4.3.5. Sustainable Transportation (E 3.5.)

According to the survey, 42.28% of respondents reached the festival using sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling, or public transportation. Satisfaction with public transport was rated at 4.07 on the 5-point scale, indicating that those who used it viewed the available options positively. These results show that a notable share of visitors relied on low-impact travel modes and that public transport, where used, was generally well regarded.

² Renewable energy sources, also called renewables, are energy sources that replenish (or renew) themselves naturally. Typical examples are solar energy, wind and biomass ([Eurostat, 2025](#)).

5. Conclusion

This sustainability audit of the Visualia Festival offers an overview of its current practices across the economic, social, and environmental sustainability dimensions. The findings highlight both strengths and areas for improvement, providing a baseline for future editions.

Economically, Visualia demonstrates a well-curated artistic programme supported by reliable technical execution and strong collaboration with artists. The selection process reflects thoughtful balancing of creative ambition and feasibility, even under budget constraints. While financial flows are tracked transparently, the audit identified gaps in structured financial planning and formal risk management. Strengthening budgeting processes and introducing formalised risk and insurance measures would enhance stability and continuity.

Socially, the festival fosters engagement through interactive installations and family-oriented elements, creating opportunities for participation across diverse audiences. Accessibility is considered at a basic level, and survey results indicate positive perceptions of inclusion and local sensitivity. However, collaborations with schools and associations were limited in 2025, and gender balance or structured inclusion strategies are not yet integrated. Expanding educational partnerships and formalising inclusion measures could reinforce the festival's social impact.

Environmentally, Visualia incorporates some pragmatic sustainability practices, such as energy-efficient installations, reduced printed materials, and reuse of technical equipment. Transport-related impacts are partially mitigated through local sourcing and occasional train shipments. Nevertheless, the absence of an environmental management plan, energy-saving strategy, and systematic waste prevention indicates that ecological considerations remain underdeveloped. Greater integration of sustainability principles—such as renewable energy use, wildlife impact measures, and clearer communication on environmental themes—would strengthen the festival's ecological profile.

Overall, the audit confirms that Visualia operates with a high level of commitment and adaptability, supported by a motivated team and strong artistic vision. This report should serve as both a reference point for future comparisons and a tool to raise awareness among organisers about opportunities for improvement. By addressing the identified gaps and building on existing strengths, Visualia can advance toward a more comprehensive sustainability framework, ensuring continued cultural value while enhancing economic, social, and environmental responsibility.