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# Sustainability at Copenhagen Light Festival

an Imagine Peace Sustainability Report

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# 1. Introduction

The Copenhagen Light Festival is one of Northern Europe's leading urban light art festivals and a distinctive cultural highlight of the Danish capital. Since its launch in 2018, the festival has grown steadily in scale and visibility, transforming Copenhagen's winter darkness into a citywide celebration of light art, lighting design, and immersive public experiences. Now established as a major annual event, the festival attracts large numbers of both local and international visitors and has earned recognition for its innovative curatorial approach, artistic quality, and contribution to Copenhagen's winter city branding. By showcasing both Danish and international artists, the Copenhagen Light Festival promotes creativity, accessibility, and the transformative potential of light in urban public space.

Held annually from late January through February, the festival unfolds across Copenhagen's city centre, harbourfront, canals, bridges, and surrounding districts, inviting visitors to explore the city through curated walking and water-based routes. Typically featuring more than 50 light installations, the festival illuminates the urban landscape with a diverse range of works, from large-scale projections and sculptural pieces to interactive and site-specific interventions integrated into Copenhagen's architecture and waterfront setting. Most installations are freely accessible, underscoring the festival's inclusive and public character. Through collaborations with artists, designers, cultural institutions, and international partners, the Copenhagen Light Festival also functions as a platform for experimentation, knowledge exchange, and cross-sector collaboration in contemporary light art and urban placemaking.

In 2026, the Copenhagen Light Festival strengthened its commitment to sustainability and stakeholder engagement through its participation in the *Imagine Peace* project. As part of this initiative, the festival conducted a sustainability audit based on multiple guidelines assessing economic, social and environmental dimensions. As part of this process, a public questionnaire was distributed from January 30<sup>th</sup> to March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, covering the full duration of the festival as well as additional days to maximise participation. In total, the survey collected 168 responses, of which 112 were fully completed and a further 34 were partially usable. The questionnaire was promoted through multiple channels, including QR codes printed cardboard and displayed at key festival locations. In addition, one table was made available on site to allow visitors to complete the survey directly. The survey was also published on the festival's website, while supplementary social media posts further supported outreach and encouraged participation.

Building on the insights gathered through the questionnaire, as well as inputs from the festival organisers and members of the audit committee, a structured sustainability audit was conducted on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026. The audit assessed the festival's performance at the levels of management, processes and results. The assessment of the results level was primarily based on the questionnaire findings and further enriched through collaborative discussion among participants. The audit consisted of a half-day online workshop involving the scientific partners, the Copenhagen Light Festival team, a representative of the partner association Essen Light Festival, and a local stakeholder. Each guideline was reviewed individually, with scores assigned based on available evidence and stakeholder input. This process resulted in a comprehensive assessment of the festival's alignment with ecological, social and economic sustainability objectives. The following report presents the outcomes of this process<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.	1	4	4
	Financial Planning	C 1.3.	3	3	9
	Risk Assessment	C 1.4.	4	3	12
	Employee Wellbeing	C 1.5.	4	2	8
	Workforce Management	C 1.6.	2	2	4
	Knowledge Management	C 1.7.	2	3	6
	<b>Total Management</b>				<b>59/80 (73,8%)</b>
Processes	Financial Flows	C 2.1.	4	3	12
	Knowledge Capture	C 2.2.	3	3	9
	Quality Controls	C 2.3.	2	2	4
	Public Relations Strategy	C 2.4.	4	3	12
	Supplier Reliability	C 2.5.	3	2	6
	Dealing with Complaints	C 2.6.	1	2	2
	<b>Total Processes</b>				<b>45/68 (66,2%)</b>
Results	Festival Continuity	C 3.1.	2	4	8
	Economic and Tourism Value	C 3.2.	3	3	9
	Sponsoring	C 3.3.	3	4	12
	Perceived Communication	C 3.4.	4	2	8
	Complaints	C 3.5.	1	2	2
	<b>Total Results</b>				<b>39/52 (75%)</b>
	<b>Total</b>				<b>143/200 (71,58%)</b>

Table 1: Overview of the Economic Sustainability Guidelines

## 2.1. Assessment Level: Management

### 2.1.1. Selection of Installations (C 1.1.)

The Copenhagen Light Festival applies a structured and multi-stage installation selection process in which submitted proposals are assessed across several review rounds by the festival team and curatorial experts. This process ensures that installations are selected based on artistic merit, technical and financial feasibility, and strategic fit with the festival's overall concept.

A strong emphasis is placed on maintaining a high artistic level across the festival programme. The audit confirmed that the selected installations demonstrate a consistently high level of conceptual and artistic quality, contributing to a coherent and attractive overall festival experience. At the same time, the diversity of installations formats supports a varied and engaging offers for visitors.

Technical feasibility forms an integral part of the selection process, ensuring that installations are compatible with the festival's urban setting and operational requirements. Given the scale of the festival – with approximately 45 installations in the current edition – the organisers have developed substantial expertise in evaluating practical implementation requirements.

Cost considerations and financial feasibility are integrated into the selection process alongside artistic criteria. The festival team carefully assesses financial implications of each proposal while striving to preserve artistic excellence. Due to the scale and structure of the programme, Copenhagen Light Festival is generally able to optimise the use of available resources without requiring significant trade-offs between artistic quality and budgetary constraints.

Overall, the installation selection process reflects a well-balanced and professional management approach, effectively combining artistic quality, financial responsibility, and technical feasibility while maximizing the efficient use of available resources.

### 2.1.2. Stakeholder Involvement (C 1.2.)

The Copenhagen Light Festival demonstrates a formalised and well-structured approach to stakeholder involvement. A broad range of stakeholders – including municipal authorities, cultural institutions, local districts, hotels, and private companies – are actively integrated into the planning process.

Stakeholder engagement begins with formal consent and individual preparatory meetings, followed by contractual agreements that define responsibilities, tasks, and financial contributions. Regular meetings and exchanges ensure continuous coordination throughout the planning process.

Stakeholders are also involved in the artistic dimension of the festival. Following the open call, selected stakeholders are invited to express preferences regarding proposed installations, allowing them to contribute to programme development in relation to specific locations and local interests.

### 2.1.3. Financial Planning (C 1.3.)

The Copenhagen Light Festival has established structured financial planning and control processes, supported by detailed budgeting, end-of-year financial statements, and comprehensive documentation requirements. As a recipient of municipal funding, the festival is contractually obliged to comply with clearly defined reporting standards and to demonstrate the achievement of predefined objectives, which are subject to regular monitoring.

Financial management is further supported by external accounting expertise and financially experienced partner organisations involved in the festival. The organisers provide financial accounts to relevant stakeholders within agreed timelines.

Economic risks are explicitly considered as part of the planning process. At the same time, the festival recognises that not all financial uncertainties can be anticipated due to the event-based nature of the programme and its dependency on external conditions. Despite this exposure, the Copenhagen Light Festival has demonstrated a notable degree of financial resilience in recent years, successfully navigating external challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, increased energy costs, and adverse weather conditions.

Overall, the festival exhibits a solid and transparent financial planning structure, with financial oversight embedded in its public funding and stakeholder accountability processes.

#### **2.1.4. Risk Assessment (C 1.4.)**

The festival has established structured risk management procedures to address technical and operational risks associated with installing artworks in public space. All installations must comply with relevant technical and safety regulations, including standards related to wind resistance, electrical safety, and general structural stability. Technical documentation is required for each installation and reviewed accordingly.

Risk prevention is embedded in the planning and approval process through technical feasibility checks and compliance verification prior to the festival. In addition, the festival team draws on legal expertise within its governance structure to support the management of risk-related and contractual issues.

With regard to insurance coverage, the festival maintains selected insurance policies, including liability protection for audiences and board members, as well as insurance for particularly high-value installations where deemed necessary. The extent to which participating artists are contractually required to hold professional liability insurance remains to be clarified, indicating that this aspect may benefit from further formalisation or communication to strengthen risk management practices.

#### **2.1.5. Employee Wellbeing (C 1.5.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival benefits from a stable core team with strong employee retention and substantial institutional experience. Key organisational knowledge is held by long-standing team members, board members, and experienced managers, providing continuity to the festival's planning and execution.

In the current edition, management responsibilities and annual planning were further strengthened through structured preparation by experienced staff members. At the same time, past experiences of staff turnover in key roles have highlighted the festival's dependency on certain individuals. While overall employee retention remains high, a significant share of operational and strategic knowledge continues to be concentrated among a limited number of persons.

Overall, employee wellbeing and retention appears strong and contributes positively to organisational continuity. Further steps to broaden internal knowledge sharing and reduce dependency on key individuals could enhance resilience and support long-term organisational continuity.

#### **2.1.6. Workforce Management (C 1.6.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival is managed by a small core team that effectively coordinates the festival's organisational and operational tasks. Despite limited personnel resources, the current workforce structure allows the festival to be delivered successfully.

At the same time, the small team size leads to periods of increased operational pressure, particularly during peak preparation and delivery phases. It also reduces flexibility in the event of staff shortages, unforeseen absences, or additional workload demands. The organisers are aware of these constraints and identify the expansion of workforce capacity as an area with potential for improvement.

To address this challenge, the festival is currently exploring options to broaden its personnel base, including potential cooperation with educational institutions and the future involvement of volunteers. Overall, workforce management is functional, but additional staffing resources would improve operational resilience and reduce pressure on the core team.

#### **2.1.7. Knowledge Management (C 1.7.)**

Shared digital platforms and internal databases are used to make relevant documents and organisational information accessible to staff. Employees have access to key materials such as funding

applications, budget documentation, accounting records, and board updates, supporting internal transparency as well as day-to-day coordination.

Knowledge sharing within the organisation is therefore facilitated through digital tools alongside ongoing internal exchange among team members. At the same time, the festival's knowledge management remains largely organic and practice-based, reflecting the dynamic nature of festival operations.

In addition to internal practices, the festival participates in international exchange formats and professional networks, contributing to knowledge sharing beyond the organisation and enabling mutual learning with other festivals and external stakeholders.

Overall, the festival has established practical and functional mechanisms for document accessibility and knowledge exchange. However, knowledge management remains only partially formalised and largely practice-based. Further structuring and documentation of internal knowledge could strengthen organisational resilience and support long-term economic sustainability.

## **2.2. Assessment Level: Processes**

### **2.2.1. Financial Flows (C 2.1.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival maintains structured and transparent documentation of its financial flows. Expenses and revenues – including ticket sales for guided tours, staff and artist payments, supplier costs, and other festival-related expenditures – are systematically recorded and traceable. Financial management is organised through predefined budget categories within which the organisers retain a degree of operational flexibility. At the same time, internal control mechanisms are in place: all expenditures require approval and sign-off by two responsible persons, ensuring control and accountability regarding the appropriateness and necessity of expenditures. Overall, the festival demonstrates a comprehensive and well-documented system for managing financial flows that supports transparency, traceability and effective financial oversight.

### **2.2.2. Knowledge Capture (C 2.2.)**

Several structured practices for capturing and retaining knowledge have been established throughout the festival cycle. Prior to the festival, relevant knowledge is gathered through the review of artist proposals submitted via the open call process, as well as through the integration of external insights and experiences from previous editions and professional exchange.

During the festival, continuous real-time communication allows organisers to respond quickly to operational developments and coordinate effectively with artists and technical partners.

After the festival, feedback is collected through visitor surveys and additional feedback channels, providing input for reflection on both visitor experiences and organisational performance. In addition, festival-related documents and operational materials are systematically stored on a central server, ensuring the availability for future planning.

### **2.2.3. Quality Controls (C 2.3.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival applies several practical quality control measures throughout the preparation and implementation of the event. All installations are subject to municipal approval procedures, including the review of technical plans by relevant municipal technicians, and artists are contractually required to deliver installations according to agreed technical and quality specifications.

Prior to the festival opening, the organising team conducts on-site checks to verify the functioning of installations. Following the festival, internal discussions are held to reflect on operational experiences and identify areas for improvement in future editions.

At the same time, quality control processes remain largely practical and experience-based rather than being embedded in a comprehensive formalised quality management system. Technical testing

generally takes place only shortly before the festival opening, which limits the time available for corrective measures in the event of technical challenges. Overall, the festival has established relevant quality control practices. However, additional formalisation of quality assurance procedures and earlier testing phases could further strengthen reliability, reduce operational risk, and enhance process robustness.

#### **2.2.4. Public Relations Strategy (C 2.4.)**

The festival implements a well-developed public relations strategy that makes use of a wide range of communication channels and addresses different target audiences. Information is disseminated before and during the festival through various platforms and promotional materials, including communication on individual artworks and the offer of guided tours.

The festival follows a staggered communication strategy, with promotional activities intensifying in the months leading up to the event and key partners actively involved in dissemination efforts. This approach reflects deliberate planning regarding timing, messaging and stakeholder involvement. While overall communication is overall well organised and comprehensive, some potential remains to further optimise proactive visitor guidance and to assess the effectiveness of individual communication channels in greater detail.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a strong and broadly comprehensive public relations strategy with only minor opportunities for refinement to further enhance outreach efficiency and visitor experience.

#### **2.2.5. Supplier Reliability (C 2.5.)**

The festival maintains generally reliable working relationships with its suppliers and participating artists, who act as key delivery partners in the realisation of the festival programme. Collaboration is based on direct coordination and a shared commitment to the successful implementation of the installations. Through the preparation and delivery phases, the festival actively supports artists and technical partners to facilitate delivery and execution. At the same time, due to the project-based and artistic nature of the festival, reliance on individual contributors remains relatively high. In some cases, alternative suppliers or backup options are limited, which can reduce flexibility in the event of delays or unforeseen issues. Overall, relationships with suppliers and partners are functional and dependable, though further diversification of supplier networks or the development of additional contingency options could enhance resilience and strengthen the festival's capacity to manage operational risks.

#### **2.2.6. Dealing with Complaints (C 2.6.)**

Visitor complaints and feedback across its communication channels, particularly through social media, are actively collected and responded to. During the festival, designated team members monitor these channels/platforms and respond to incoming questions and complaints, prioritising issues that require immediate attention.

The handling of complaints depends on the nature and urgency of the issue, and the organisers demonstrate a responsive and pragmatic approach in addressing concerns as they arise. However, complaint management remains largely informal and decentralised. There is no clearly defined, time-bound, or centralised procedure for systematically processing, documenting, and evaluating complaints over time.

Overall, the festival shows a high degree of responsiveness at process level. Further formalisation of complaint management procedures, including clearer documentation and follow-up mechanisms, could strengthen transparency, support organisational learning, and enhance process consistency.

## 2.3. Assessment Level: Results

### 2.3.1. Festival Continuity (C 3.1.)

Survey results indicate a very strong basis for the long-term continuity of the festival. A substantial majority of respondents (91.6%) reported having visited previous editions, pointing to a high level of repeat attendance and an established loyal visitor base. Future visitation intentions are likewise highly positive: 87.4% of respondents stated that they would visit the festival again, while only 3.7% indicated they would not return. A further 8.9% were undecided. Overall, the results demonstrate strong visitor loyalty and suggest very positive prospects for continued audience retention in future festival editions.

### 2.3.2. Economic and Tourism Value (C 3.2.)

Survey findings indicate that the Copenhagen Light Festival generates substantial economic and tourism value for the destination. For more than half of the respondents (51.1%), the festival represented the primary reason for travelling to Copenhagen, underlining its role as a significant visitor attractor. Among these visitors, 47.8% reported staying overnight, indicating a relevant contribution to local accommodation demand and related tourism expenditure. Visitor perceptions of the festival's economic contribution were also positive, with an average rating of 3.8 out of 5. This suggests that attendees recognise the festival's beneficial effects on the local economy and tourism sector. Overall, the results indicate that the festival provides a meaningful contribution to Copenhagen's tourism attractiveness and visitor economy.

### 2.3.3. Sponsoring (C 3.3.)

The festival demonstrates strong performance in securing sponsorships that contribute significantly to its financial sustainability. A broad network of sponsors supports the festival, providing substantial financial contributions and reinforcing its funding structure. These partnerships enhance the festival's financial resilience while also strengthening its visibility, credibility, and connections to relevant external stakeholders. Overall, the festival benefits from a well-established sponsorship structure that supports its long-term continuity and organisational stability.

### 2.3.4. Perceived Communication (C 3.4.)

A moderate level of satisfaction with the festival's communication before and during the event is indicated by the survey results, with an average rating of 3.7. At the same time, respondents rated the relevance of communication relatively highly, with an average score of 4.0, highlighting the importance visitors place on clear and timely information. Taken together, these results suggest that while communication is generally perceived positively, current performance does not yet fully meet visitor expectations regarding its importance. Overall, the results point out to a functioning communication approach, with room for further improvement to better align communication quality with visitor expectations.

### 2.3.5. Complaints (C 3.5.)

Survey responses indicate a moderate perception of how visitor feedback and complaints are considered, reflected in an average rating of 2.43. This suggests that while visitors are aware of existing feedback channels, the extent to which their input is perceived as being considered remains limited. More than 5% of respondents reported having submitted feedback indicating that available feedback mechanisms are actively used. Overall, the results show that the festival has functioning mechanism for collecting visitor feedback. However, there is room to improve both the perceived responsiveness and the visibility of how feedback and complaints are addressed.

### 3. Social Sustainability



	Guideline	Guideline ID	Relevance Points (RP)	Scoring Points (SP)	Weighted Points (RP*SP)
Management	Selection of Installations	S 1.1.	4	3	12
	Collaboration with Schools and Associations	S 1.2.	4	4	16
	Social Inclusion	S 1.3.	3	4	12
	Family Concept	S 1.4.	4	2	8
	Conflict Management (Residents)	S 1.5.	2	1	2
	Gender Concept	S 1.6.	1	2	2
	Employee Training	S 1.7.	2	2	4
	<b>Total Management</b>				
Processes	Noise Reduction	S 2.1.	2	2	4
	Light Pollution	S 2.2.	4	1	4
	Accessible Communication	S 2.3.	4	4	16
	Safety Measures	S 2.4.	3	2	6
	Active Participation	S 2.5.	3	2	6
	Parking	S 2.6.	1	3	3
	<b>Total Processes</b>				
Results	Light and Noise Disturbance	S 3.1.	4	4	16
	Traffic Disturbance	S 3.2.	1	2	2
	Cross-Generational Inclusiveness	S 3.3.	3	1	3
	Participants with Disabilities	S 3.4.	2	2	4
	Consideration of Local Needs	S 3.5.	3	3	9
	<b>Total Results</b>				
<b>Total</b>					<b>129/200 (64,5%)</b>

Table 2: Overview of the Social Sustainability Guidelines

## 3.1. Assessment Level: Management

### 3.1.1. Selection of Installations (S 1.1.)

The Copenhagen Light Festival integrates several social sustainability aspects into its installation selection process. The festival programme includes participatory and interactive works that encourage visitor engagement and support an inclusive festival experience.

Cultural diversity is further promoted through the involvement of artists from a wide range of countries, fostering international cultural exchange and contributing to a diverse artistic programme. Local and regional artistic engagement is additionally promoted through the inclusion of Danish artists and the support for community-based artistic initiatives.

While gender balance is monitored at an overall level, it is not applied as a formal selection criterion for individual installations. Artistic quality and conceptual alignment with the festival's overall vision remain the primary selection criteria, with considerations regarding balance taken into account only in cases of significant imbalance.

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

Collaboration with educational and youth-oriented institutions is sought regularly to support creative participation among younger generations. Each year, the festival cooperates with a university partner, with the specific institution varying across editions, thereby supporting academic exchange.

Additional collaborations have included partnerships with a social school and the youth initiative "Ungt Lys," through which young participants are involved in the development of artworks and given opportunities to contribute to festival installations in public space.

These collaborations provide valuable learning and participation opportunities for young people, while also bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas into the festival's artistic programme.

Overall, the festival demonstrates active collaboration with more than three educational and youth organisations within architecture, design and IT (e.g., KEA, KADK, ITU, DTU), contributing positively to local engagement and creative participation.

### 3.1.3. Social Inclusion (S 1.3.)

The festival demonstrates a comprehensive approach to social inclusion and accessibility. Accessibility considerations are integrated into the planning of installations and their spatial placement, with particular attention given to locating artworks in areas that are accessible to wheelchair users wherever feasible and in compliance with public-space accessibility regulations.

Beyond physical accessibility, the festival also implements targeted measures to address the needs of visitors with specific requirements. These include, for example, guided tours designed for people experiencing anxiety, which offer a quieter and more structured festival experience, supported by trained guides and individualised assistance.

While not all installations can be made fully accessible due to technical or safety constraints, accessibility and inclusion are systematically considered within the festival's overall planning process.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusive participation and proactive accessibility measures across different visitor needs.

### 3.1.4. Family Concept (S 1.4.)

The festival offers several elements that make the event attractive for families. It takes place during the winter school holidays and features interactive installations and activities, such as a treasure hunt as well as artworks that naturally appeal to children and intergenerational audiences.

The decentralised placement of several installations across the city further supports accessibility for families from different neighbourhoods of Copenhagen. In practice, the festival attracts a diverse audience comprising children, parents, and grandparents. These family-friendly characteristics emerge

primarily from the overall design and character of the festival rather than from a formally defined family concept or dedicated, structured family-oriented programming.

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

Resident complaints and conflicts are primarily addressed through an informal and experience-based approach. During the festival period, organisers remain reachable and respond directly to emerging issues, typically handling concerns on a case-by-case basis through personal communication. Where necessary, specific expertise is consulted to assess or clarify complaints, for example in relation to sound levels. In addition, the organising team draws on experience from previous editions to identify potentially sensitive locations in advance and to mitigate disturbances where possible.

At the same time, responsibilities and procedures for conflict management are not embedded in a formalised system. The handling of resident concerns relies largely on practical experience, situational judgement, and individual decision-making.

Overall, the festival demonstrates awareness of resident concerns and a responsive attitude toward conflict resolution, though the process remains largely informal and only partially structured.

#### **3.1.6. Gender Concept (S 1.6.)**

The festival follows general principles of equality and inclusiveness in its organisational and communication practices. Information and communication materials are designed to be accessible to the festival's international audience and are provided primarily in Danish and English, with selected offers available in additional languages.

Gender representation is monitored at an overall programme level, and the organisers remain attentive to balance across the festival programme. However, gender balance is not actively enforced as a formal selection criterion, and artistic quality remains the primary basis for decision-making.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a basic commitment to equality and inclusiveness, though gender considerations are not formalised through a dedicated gender concept.

#### **3.1.7. Employee Training (S 1.7.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival approaches employee training primarily on a needs-based basis. Training measures are tailored to the specific competencies required by individual team members rather than organised through a formalised internal training programme. Instead, the organisation places strong emphasis on recruiting staff with relevant qualifications and addressing identified skill gaps as they arise.

Additional learning and development are supported through knowledge exchange with other festivals and professional networks, allowing staff to gain external insights, up-to-date knowledge and share good practices across the sector.

Overall, employee training is handled in a flexible and practice-oriented manner. While this approach allows the organisation to respond efficiently to concrete skill requirements, further structuring of training activities could support knowledge consolidation and long-term capacity building.

## **3.2. Assessment Level: Processes**

### **3.2.1. Noise Reduction (S 2.1.)**

The festival implements several practical measures to limit noise impacts on residents and surrounding areas. Sound is used selectively within installations, with many artworks intentionally designed to operate without significant audio components. Where sound is included, noise levels are kept within permitted limits and adjusted based on contextual requirements and experience from previous editions. The festival further limits potential disturbances by adhering to public-space regulations on operating hours, with activities ending by 10:00 p.m. Music or sound elements are avoided unless they are integral to the artistic concept of an installation.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a practical and experience-based approach to noise reduction, although broader communication or awareness-raising measures related to visitor-generated noise are not formally implemented.

### **3.2.2. Light Pollution (S 2.2.)**

Considerations related to light pollution are addressed to a limited extent within the planning and selection of installations. Organisers avoid selecting artworks that would result in clearly unnecessary or excessive light emissions, and potential light pollution impacts are considered on an informal basis during the evaluation of proposals.

However, there is no structured assessment process, formal guidelines, or specific technical measures in place to systematically address light pollution. Broader aspects such as detailed impact assessments, structured communication with residents, or regular review procedures are not formally integrated into the planning process.

Overall, awareness of the topic exists within the organisation, but current practices remain limited and largely informal.

### **3.2.3. Accessible Communication (S 2.3.)**

The festival implements comprehensive measures to support accessible communication for a wide range of visitor groups. Festival information is provided in formats that enhance accessibility, including digital content that can be read aloud in both Danish and English through the festival app. These measures support visitors with reading difficulties or visual impairments and contribute to making essential festival information more inclusive and widely accessible.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a strong commitment to accessible communication through the integration of inclusive digital information tools.

### **3.2.4. Safety Measures (S 2.4.)**

Safety considerations are integrated into the planning and implementation of installations. Safety-related aspects are reviewed during the selection and approval process, with technical documentation for installations assessed internally and subsequently submitted to the municipality for further review. Additional precautionary measures are implemented where required, particularly in relation to weather-related risks such as wind. Installations are secured accordingly during setup and operation to ensure public safety throughout the festival period.

Overall, the festival demonstrates structured safety planning and preparation measures, although the current approach remains focused primarily on technical and installation-related safety rather than a broader comprehensive safety management system.

### **3.2.5. Active Participation (S 2.5.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival offers several opportunities for active public participation through interactive installations and collaborative projects involving schools and other groups. Participatory elements are embedded into selected artworks and activities, enabling visitors and community members to engage directly with parts of the festival programme.

At the same time, active participation is not positioned as the dominant focus of the festival's overall artistic concept. The organisers deliberately maintain a balance between participatory and non-participatory installations in order to manage visitor flow and preserve a diverse festival experience. Overall, the festival provides meaningful but selective opportunities for public participation, with interactive elements forming a complementary component rather than defining feature of the programme.

### **3.2.6. Parking (S 2.6.)**

The festival relies on the city's existing parking infrastructure and does not provide additional or dedicated parking facilities for the event. This approach is consistent with the mobility context of Copenhagen and supports the city's transport and sustainability objectives by avoiding the creation of temporary or additional parking spaces.

Visitors are expected to use the municipal parking system. Where appropriate, additional support measures are selectively provided.

## **3.3. Assessment Level: Results**

### **3.3.1. Light and Noise Disturbance (S 3.1.)**

Survey results indicate that the festival generates only limited additional disturbance in terms of light and noise. Residents rated perceived additional light pollution at 2.2 and additional noise at 1.72 on a 5-point Likert scale. These results suggest that while the festival creates some noticeable effects, overall disturbance levels remain low and are generally perceived as acceptable by residents.

### **3.3.2. Traffic Disturbance (S 3.2.)**

According to survey results, the additional traffic generated by the festival is perceived as relatively limited, with traffic disturbance receiving an average rating of 2.0 on a 5-point Likert scale.

At the same time, satisfaction with parking availability and organisation was lower, with an average rating of 2.77. This indicates that parking and mobility arrangements are viewed less positively than the general traffic situation.

### **3.3.3. Cross-Generational Inclusiveness (S 3.3.)**

Survey participation data indicate that younger and older age groups represent a limited share of the audience, with only 8.03% of respondents belonging to these age categories.

While the festival's general format may appeal to a broad public, no dedicated initiatives or targeted measures are currently implemented specifically to engage or reach younger or older age groups.

Overall, the results suggest that cross-generational reach remains limited and that more targeted measures would be required to strengthen engagement and active participation among these groups.

#### **3.3.4. Participants with Disabilities (S 3.4.)**

Survey results indicate a moderate perceived level of accessibility and inclusiveness for people with disabilities at the festival. The accessibility of installations received an average rating of 3.7, while perceived inclusiveness was rated at 2.9, resulting in a combined average of 3.3. These findings suggest that the festival is generally perceived as reasonably accessible, particularly with regard to physical access, while perceptions of broader inclusiveness remain more moderate. Overall, the findings indicate a satisfactory but not yet fully comprehensive level of accessibility and inclusion for visitors with disabilities.

#### **3.3.5. Consideration of Local Needs (S 3.5.)**

Survey feedback indicates that residents perceive local needs to be well considered during the festival. The perceived consideration of local interests received an average score of 3.58. At the same time, perceived disturbance to residents was rated relatively low, with an average score of 1.98, suggesting that the festival is generally not experienced as highly disruptive by the local community. Taken together, these results indicate that the festival integrates well into its urban setting and demonstrates a solid consideration of local community interests.

## 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	2	2
	Energy Saving Plan	E 1.4.	3	1	3
	Cooperation with Environmental Organisations	E 1.5.	2	0	0
	Life Cycle Assessment	E 1.6.	4	2	8
	Environmental Awareness	E 1.7.	3	3	9
	<b>Total Management</b>				
Processes	Energy Saving Measures	E 2.1.	4	1	4
	Wildlife Impact Measures	E 2.2.	1	2	2
	Public Transportation Support Measures	E 2.3.	4	2	8
	Environmentally Sustainable Printing	E 2.4.	1	2	2
	Environmentally Sustainable Resources	E 2.5.	3	2	6
	Technical Quality Controls	E 2.6.	4	2	8
	<b>Total Processes</b>				
Results	Energy Consumption	E 3.1.	3	4	12
	Energy Savings	E 3.2.	4	2	8
	Energy from Renewable Sources	E 3.3.	3	4	12
	Waste Generation	E 3.4.	1	4	4
	Sustainable Transportation	E 3.5.	2	4	8
	<b>Total Results</b>				
<b>Total</b>					<b>107/200 (53,5%)</b>

Table 3: Overview of the Ecological Sustainability Guidelines

## 4.1. Assessment Level: Management

### 4.1.1. Selection of Installations (E 1.1.)

The Copenhagen Light Festival considers ecological aspects in the selection of installations, alongside artistic and technical criteria. Environmental sustainability is taken into account during the evaluation of artworks, indicating a growing awareness of ecological responsibility within the curatorial process.

The organisers have also engaged in an initial and informal reflection on the festival's alignment with sustainability principles, including references to the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the same time, ecological criteria are not yet systematically or comprehensively embedded in the installation selection process. Environmental considerations currently remain secondary to artistic quality and conceptual fit and are applied primarily on a case-by-case basis rather than through clearly defined selection standards.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a basic to moderate integration of ecological sustainability aspects in the selection of installations, with clear potential for further formalisation, prioritisation, and strategic development.

### 4.1.2. Environmental Management (E 1.2.)

The festival does not currently operate with a formalised environmental management plan or dedicated environmental management system. However, environmental considerations – particularly regarding energy consumption – have gained importance within the organisation, especially following the recent energy crisis. This has led to greater awareness of energy-related environmental impacts, with consumption issues increasingly taken into account during planning and reflective processes.

Environmental topics are therefore recognised at management level and inform internal discussions and decision-making to a growing extent.

However, these considerations are not yet embedded within a structured environmental management framework. Formal procedures, clearly defined responsibilities, measurable objectives, or systematically documented measures are currently lacking.

Overall, the festival demonstrates an emerging awareness and prioritisation of environmental management issues, but this has not yet translated into a comprehensive or formalised management approach.

### 4.1.3. Waste Prevention (E 1.3.)

Several practical waste prevention measures are applied, despite the absence of a formal, festival-specific waste prevention plan. Due to its formal and operational setup, the festival generates comparatively limited waste overall.

Printed materials are kept to a minimum, with physical flyers distributed selectively through designated locations such as hotels and shops. Visitors are encouraged to use digital information instead of printed maps. Reusable cups are used at coffee stands, and the use of recyclable or reusable materials in installations is considered where applicable.

In addition, operational staff monitor festival areas during the event to help ensure cleanliness and reduce littering in public spaces.

Overall, waste prevention is addressed through pragmatic measures, although further formalisation could support consistency and long-term ecological performance.

### 4.1.4. Energy-Saving Plan (E 1.4.)

The festival considers energy consumption in the planning and selection of installations. Energy efficiency is integrated into the curatorial process, and the use of LED-based technologies is mandatory for all installations presented at the festival.

The organisers therefore apply practical energy-saving considerations when selecting artworks and technical solutions. However, these measures are implemented at an operational level rather than within a comprehensive or formalised energy-saving plan. Clear targets, documented objectives, or systematic monitoring mechanisms are not yet in place.

While awareness of energy use is clearly present and influences decision-making, the festival does not yet operate with a fully structured or documented strategic energy-saving framework.

#### **4.1.5. Cooperation with Environmental Organisations (E 1.5.)**

Active cooperation with environmental organisations in the planning or implementation of the festival is currently not maintained. While collaborations with environmental institutions, such as the EU Environmental Agency, took place in past editions, these are not part of the current festival practice. As a result, specialised environmental expertise from external organisations is not systematically integrated into present decision-making structures or planning processes. Overall, cooperation with environmental organisations is currently limited.

#### **4.1.6. Life Cycle Assessment (E 1.6.)**

The festival does not conduct a formal life cycle assessment of its installations or overall festival operations. However, aspects related to lifecycle thinking are considered in practice. The festival makes use of borrowed and reused installations, and selected artworks are stored for future reuse by other festivals. In addition, reusability of materials and installations is also taken into account during planning and selection where feasible.

While these practices demonstrate awareness of lifecycle considerations, they are not embedded in a structured LCA framework. Lifecycle aspects are applied selectively and are not systematically documented or evaluated across all festival activities.

#### **4.1.7. Environmental Awareness (E 1.7.)**

The light festival shows awareness of environmental topics and has addressed such issues through selected communication and artistic elements. Environmental themes, such as waste and biodiversity, have been incorporated into parts of the festival's communication and thematic framing. In addition, 10 to 15 individual installations (out of 52) have explicitly engaged with environmental materials or sustainability-related topics, contributing to reflection and awareness-raising among visitors.

However, while not representing a central component of the festival's concept and programming, the festival makes significant efforts to embed environmental awareness in its programme.

## **4.2. Assessment Level: Processes**

#### **4.2.1. Energy-Saving Measures (E 2.1.)**

The Copenhagen Light Festival applies selected energy-saving measures in its operational processes, particularly through the optimisation of energy efficiency in installations and technical equipment. Energy consumption is measured for relevant lighting and projection equipment, and efficiency considerations are integrated into technical planning.

While initial energy-saving practices are in place, proactive and systematic measures to actively manage and reduce overall festival-related energy demand remain limited. Overall, the festival demonstrates early operational efforts toward energy efficiency, although a more comprehensive and structured approach to energy management has not yet been established.

#### **4.2.2. Wildlife Impact Measures (E 2.2.)**

Potential wildlife impacts are considered to a limited extent in the planning of installations. Operating hours are restricted to avoid unnecessary lighting beyond festival times, and potential ecological sensitivities are taken into account when selecting locations and artworks.

In specific cases, wildlife-related concerns have influenced planning decisions, including the exclusion of certain locations due to ecological sensitivity. Wildlife considerations are also addressed in dialogue with the municipality as part of the installation approval.

However, these measures remain selective and context-specific. Wildlife protection is not embedded within a formalised strategy or supported by systematic assessment or monitoring procedures.

Overall, the festival demonstrates awareness of wildlife-related issues and applies precautionary measures in individual cases, but current practices remain limited and largely informal.

#### **4.2.3. Public Transportation Support Measures (E 2.3.)**

The festival implements selected measures to encourage the use of public transportation. The festival route is integrated into the city's existing walking and metro infrastructure, facilitating access through sustainable mobility options.

In cooperation with the metro operator, a dedicated festival ticket was offered during the event, and guided tours were scheduled to begin near metro stations in order to further support and incentivise the use of public transport.

While these measures provide some encouragement for sustainable mobility, public transportation promotion remains limited to selected initiatives and is not yet part of a broader and formally defined mobility strategy.

#### **4.2.4. Environmentally Sustainable Printing (E 2.4.)**

Measures to reduce the environmental impact of printed materials are taken by keeping print production to a minimum and shifting a substantial share of festival information to digital channels. Most visitor information is provided online through digital platforms, QR codes, and the festival app. Printed materials are used selectively where physical information remains necessary. These materials are designed to meet durability requirements for outdoor use, which limits the extent to which fully recycled printing options can be applied.

Overall, the festival demonstrates a conscious effort to minimise the environmental footprint of printed communication, primarily through digitalisation.

#### **4.2.5. Environmentally Sustainable Resources (E 2.5.)**

The festival applies several measures to support more sustainable resource use in its operations. Technical equipment is stored centrally in a warehouse and made available for reuse across installations, allowing artists to utilise existing materials and reducing the need for new equipment purchases. Materials used during the festival are increasingly categorised and documented to facilitate future reuse and improve resource efficiency over time.

In addition, the festival also uses electric vehicles for internal transport and logistics within the city. While these practices demonstrate practical efforts toward resource efficiency, broader and more systematic consideration of sustainable resource management across all operational areas remains limited.

#### **4.2.6. Technical Quality Controls (E 2.6.)**

Practical technical quality controls are applied during festival operations to ensure installations function efficiently and safely. Where possible, technical systems and components are shut down when not in

use in order to reduce unnecessary energy consumption, while maintaining the functional integrity of the installations.

Throughout the festival period, technical monitoring is carried out on an ongoing basis. This includes regular checks of installations as well as supervision of potential operational risks, such as overheating or the generation of smoke, allowing issues to be identified and addressed promptly.

While these measures demonstrate active technical oversight and day-to-day operational control, technical quality controls remain primarily practice-based and focused on immediate operational needs, rather than being embedded within a fully comprehensive and formalised technical control system.

## 4.3. Assessment Level: Results

### 4.3.1. Energy Consumption (E 3.1.)

The Copenhagen Light Festival demonstrates efficient energy consumption for a light-based event. Measured energy use per installation places the festival within a low consumption range relative to the overall scale and technical nature of the event. The festival's total energy consumption is comparable to that of a single football match in the Danish Liga. On a typical evening, the festival uses approximately the same amount of electricity as three electric cars charging their batteries (less than 3 kW/installation).

### 4.3.2. Energy Savings (E 3.2.)

Survey responses indicate a moderate-to-positive perception of the festival's energy performance and ecological sustainability. Attendees rated perceived additional energy consumption at 2.71, suggesting that while energy use is noticeable, it is generally perceived as limited.

At the same time, the perceived ecological sustainability of the installations received a positive average rating of 3.97, indicating that visitors largely associate the festival with environmentally responsible practices.

Overall, the results reflect a favourable perception of the festival's ecological performance, while also pointing to remaining potential for further improvement towards more advanced or best-practice sustainability standards.

### 4.3.3. Energy from Renewable Sources<sup>2</sup> (E 3.3.)

The festival relies to a significant extent on electricity generated from renewable energy sources. Available information on energy sourcing indicates that a substantial share of the electricity used for the festival is derived from renewables. The festival receives electricity from a certified energy supplier that has documented that the power supplied to the festival is covered by 100% renewable energy within its overall energy portfolio.

### 4.3.4. Waste Generation (E 3.4.)

Survey results indicate that additional waste generation during the Copenhagen Light Festival is perceived as low. Respondents rated perceived waste production at 1.92 and the impact on city cleanliness at 1.51 on a 5-point Likert scale.

These findings suggest that the festival is generally not associated with significant waste generation or cleanliness-related disturbances in the urban environment.

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<sup>2</sup> 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](#)).

#### **4.3.5. Sustainable Transportation (E 3.5.)**

Survey results indicate a very strong use of sustainable transportation among visitors to the Copenhagen Light Festival. In total, 78.86% of respondents reported reaching the festival by sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling, or public transportation.

In addition, visitor satisfaction with public transportation was rated very positively, with an average score of 4.33 on a 5-point Likert scale. The results demonstrate that the festival benefits from a highly sustainable visitor mobility profile and strong public transport satisfaction.

## 5. Conclusion

This sustainability audit of the Copenhagen Light Festival provides a comprehensive overview of its current performance across the economic, social, and ecological dimensions of sustainability. Overall, the findings highlight a professionally organised and well-established festival with strong operational structures, high stakeholder support, and generally positive sustainability outcomes. At the same time, the audit identifies several areas where further formalisation and strategic development could enhance the festival's long-term sustainability performance.

From an economic perspective, the festival demonstrates a strong and stable organisational foundation. Structured installation selection processes, transparent financial management, extensive stakeholder involvement, and well-established sponsorship arrangements contribute positively to the festival's economic sustainability. High visitor loyalty, significant tourism relevance, and solid financial oversight supported by municipal accountability structures further strengthen the festival's economic position. Opportunities for improvement relate primarily to the further formalisation of internal procedures, particularly in the areas of knowledge management, workforce capacity, and the development of more structured contingency and complaint-management systems.

In terms of social sustainability, the festival performs well in creating an accessible and broadly inclusive cultural event that is well integrated into the urban context and positively perceived by residents. Accessibility measures, low levels of perceived disturbance, and strong consideration of local needs contribute positively to the festival's social sustainability profile. The festival also supports youth engagement and selective participatory activities through collaborations with educational institutions and interactive installations. At the same time, the audit indicates that several social sustainability measures remain largely informal or practice-based. More structured approaches to areas such as family-oriented programming, conflict management, gender strategy, and cross-generational engagement could further strengthen the festival's social inclusiveness and societal impact.

Ecologically, the festival shows growing awareness of environmental sustainability and has implemented several practical measures, particularly in relation to energy-efficient installations, the use of renewable electricity, waste minimisation, material reuse, and sustainable visitor mobility. Survey results further indicate positive visitor perceptions regarding ecological sustainability and low perceived waste and environmental disturbance. Nevertheless, ecological sustainability remains the least formalised of the three dimensions. Many environmental measures are currently implemented pragmatically rather than through structured management systems, and key areas such as environmental governance, cooperation with environmental organisations, and formalised environmental planning are still underdeveloped.

Overall, the audit confirms that the Copenhagen Light Festival is a mature and professionally managed event with strong organisational capabilities and a generally positive sustainability profile. Its principal strengths lie in its governance structures, financial transparency, stakeholder integration, accessibility, and operational awareness of environmental issues. Future progress will depend less on introducing entirely new sustainability initiatives than on formalising and systematising many of the good practices already in place. By embedding existing efforts into more structured and strategic frameworks, the festival can further strengthen its long-term resilience and sustainability performance across all three dimensions.