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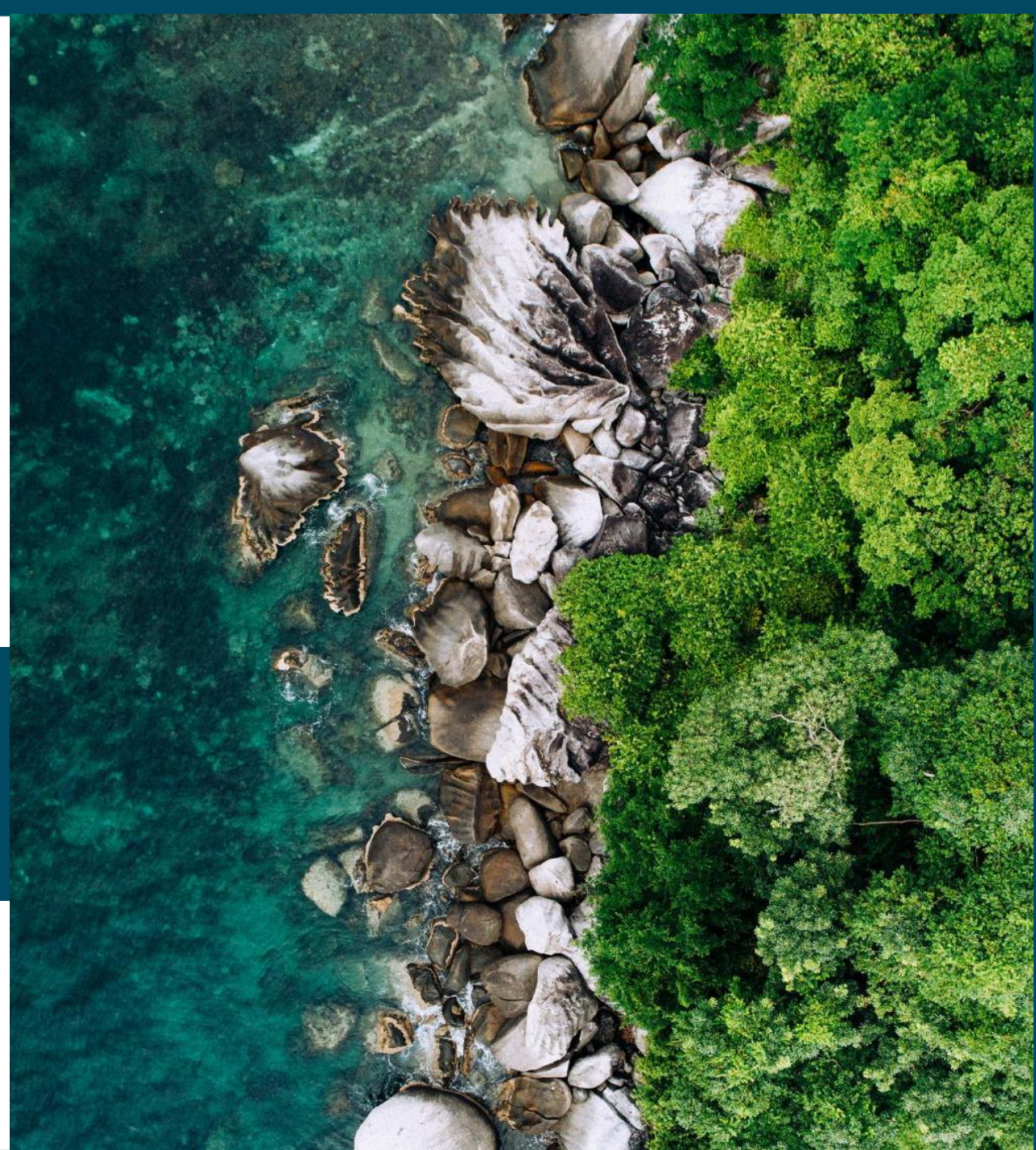
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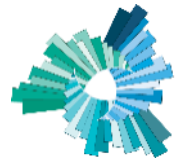
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# Sustainability Report 2024 GDS-Forum & CityDNA Conference

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# Our Sustainability Approach



The GDS-Movement, CityDNA, and Visit Bruges Convention Bureau were committed to regenerative tourism and worked to help destinations strategise, scale up positive impacts, and prioritise events with a positive social, environmental, and economic legacy.

**The 2024 GDS-Forum & CityDNA Autumn Conference hosted 270 in-person attendees from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2024.**

Visit Bruges Convention Bureau collaborated with GDS-Movement and CityDNA to establish sustainability objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) tailored to the city's local infrastructure, policies, and goals.

The event prioritised sustainability in all aspects of planning and execution, focusing on four key pillars: Climate Action, Circular Economy, Social Responsibility, and Legacy & Impact.



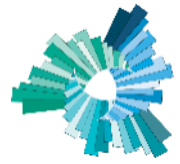
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# Objectives and KIPs

## Climate Action:

*Partnerships and action to transition to net zero carbon emissions while regenerating biodiversity*

- Integrate **offsetting** of travel CO<sub>2</sub>e as part of the registration process
- **90%** sustainable mobility solutions used for local transportation, walking distance venues and public transportation to/from the event
- **90%+** of food locally sourced (less than 160km)
- Eliminate red meats and focus on **sustainable** ingredients
- **100%** of travel and unavoidable event emissions to be offset via certified carbon projects

## Circular Economy:

*Rethinking how we manage and use resources during the event*

- Eliminate **90%** of single-use plastic, polystyrene, and PVC
- **100%** of all signage and branding to be made from more sustainable materials
- **70%** of waste diversion rate
- **90%+** of food waste composted
- **100%** of decorations and floral arrangements rented

## Social Responsibility

*Driving Inclusion, Diversity, Equality and Accessibility (IDEA) for participants*

- **90%** of suppliers are local
- **30%** of suppliers are social or impact enterprises
- Integrate **purposeful** social activities into both events

## Legacy & Impact

*Leaving a positive legacy for the destinations that host us*

- Build an **international community and capacity** for impact by sharing ideas and experiences at the Impact Day event
- Advance understanding, approaches and the **investment case for funding of Impact projects**

# Results



Area of Action	KPIs	Results
Climate Action	✓ Integrate <b>offsetting</b> of travel CO2e as part of the registration process	✓ A portion of each ticket price went into carbon offsetting projects.
	✓ <b>Sustainable mobility solutions</b> used for local transportation, walking distance venues and public transportation to/from the event	✓ Maximum distance between in-city venues: approx. 1km. Only one venue was not within walking distance, and bus transportation was offered to all attendees.
	✓ <b>90%+</b> of food locally sourced (less than 160km)	✓ More than 90% of the food was locally sourced.
	✓ <b>Eliminate red meat</b> and focus on sustainable ingredients	X 6% of the menu was red meat, 286 portions served.
	✓ <b>100% of travel</b> and unavoidable event emissions to be <b>offset</b> via certified carbon projects	✓ 100% of travel emissions were offset via three South Pole's certified climate action projects: Cabo Delgado Cookstoves, Mozambique; Chlorine dispensers, Uganda; Krong No Hydropower, Vietnam.
Circular Economy	✓ <b>Eliminate 90%</b> of single-use <b>plastic</b> , polystyrene, and PVC	✓ No single-use plastic, polystyrene or PVC usage was used.
	✓ <b>100%</b> of all signage and branding to be made from more sustainable materials	✓ <b>100%</b> of all signage and branding was made from more sustainable materials: paper, cardboard, or PAA/PET.
	✓ <b>70%</b> of waste <b>diversion rate</b>	X An estimate of 45% of waste was sent to the landfill. One venue provided comprehensive data, which resulted in a 50% diversion rate.
	✓ <b>90%+</b> of food waste <b>composted</b>	X 28% of the food waste was composted (estimated).
	✓ <b>100%</b> of decorations and floral arrangements <b>rented</b>	✓ <b>100%</b> of decorations and floral arrangements were rented.
Social Responsibility	✓ <b>90%</b> of suppliers are <b>local</b>	✓ <b>85%</b> of the suppliers were local.
	✓ <b>30%</b> of suppliers are <b>social</b> or <b>impact enterprises</b>	X Not achieved.
	✓ Integrate <b>purposeful social activities</b> into both events	✓ Walking and bike tours in a Nature Park, the city centres' historical sites and its surroundings were organised for free for all attendees.
Legacy & Impact	✓ Build an <b>international community and capacity</b> for impact by sharing ideas and experiences at the Impact Day* event	✓ More than 120 participants from Australia, Europe and North America participated to the Impact Day*, where impact methodology and case studies were discussed.
	✓ Advance understanding, approaches and the <b>investment case for funding of Impact projects</b>	✓ Local and international field experts presented subvention strategies and funding to scale business events' impact.

\* Organised by [VISITFLANDERS](#), [#MEET4IMPACT](#) and GDS-Movement, the Impact Day took place on 14 October 2024.

# Our Footprint

- By providing bus transportation for attendees to the offsite venue instead of relying on cars, we saved approximately **278 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**.
- Our event produced the equivalent of **66 standard trash bags full of waste** - and reused the equivalent of **12**.
- By serving 58% vegetarian and plant-based food instead of meat or fish, we saved enough water to fill **183 Olympic-sized swimming pools**.
- Through all our walking and cycling tours, we covered a total distance equivalent to **12 marathons**.



# Carbon Emissions



87% of the event's emissions came from travel to/from the host destination. The remaining 13% came from food and beverage, waste, event production, electricity, and local transportation. Where data was unavailable, impact data was estimated using the GDS-Movement database of sustainable events.

The [TRACE platform](#) was used to calculate the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

To support sustainability efforts, a portion of each ticket price was allocated to offset all travel-related emissions. Three certified "Gold Standard" carbon offsetting projects were selected via [South Pole](#) to ensure the highest credibility.



## Carbon Footprint

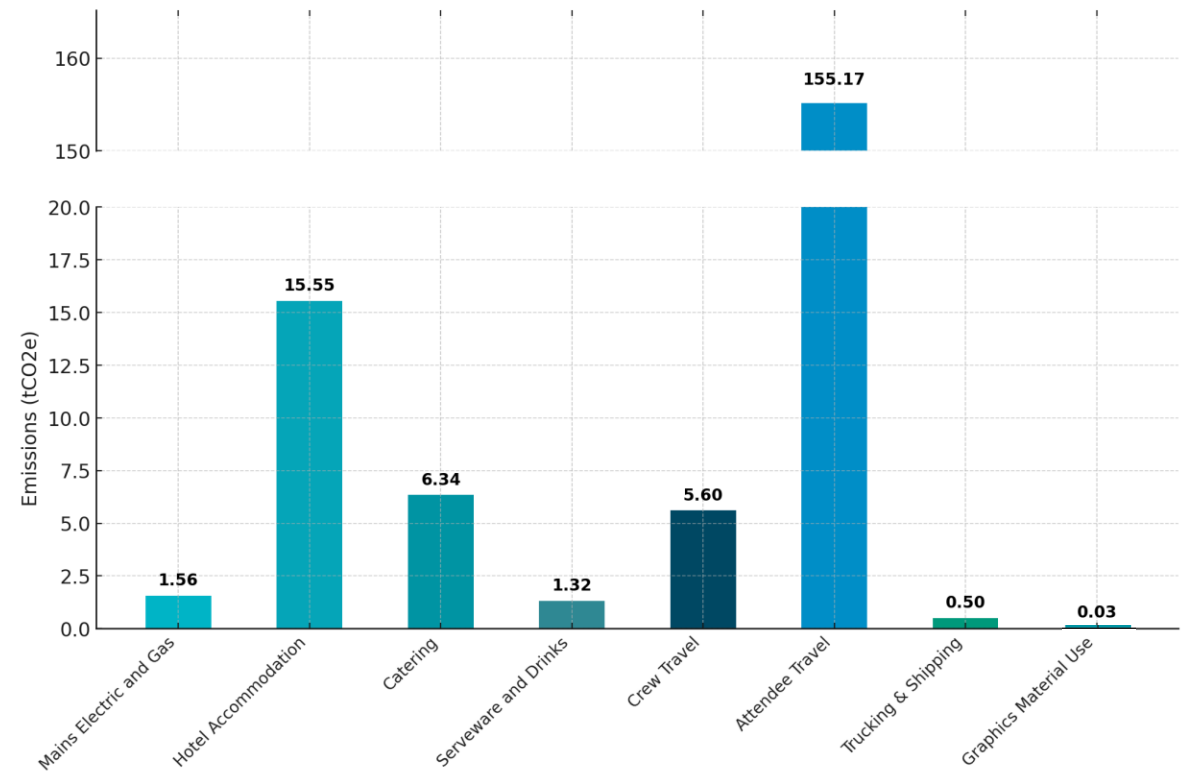
**186.18** tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Total carbon footprint

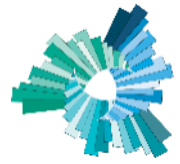
**689.57** kgCO<sub>2</sub>e

Average carbon footprint per attendee

Emissions Breakdown by Category







# Carbon Offsetting Projects

The following **Certified Gold Standard** projects were financed through the purchase of carbon offsetting credits, via [South Pole](#).

## Cabo Delgado Cookstoves, Mozambique

Efficient stoves for local development  
and women's empowerment



## Chlorine dispensers, Uganda

Improving lives and reducing  
emissions through clean water  
filters

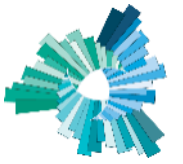


## Krong No Hydropower, Vietnam

Tapping into Vietnam's large  
hydropower potential to support  
sustainable growth



# Carbon Offsetting Certificates



 south pole The Climate Company

## Certificate of climate protection



This certificate verifies that

### 80 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

has been reduced from the atmosphere to match the unavoidable emissions as a result of the GDS Forums and CityDNA Autumn Conference, organised in Bruges, 15-18 October, 2024.

Supporting South Pole's climate action project:

**GS2404 International Water Purification Programme - CPA 2 Chlorine dispensers in Uganda**

  
Dr. Daniel Klier  
CEO, South Pole



This certificate is issued by South Pole. For more information about our services and more than 700 climate protection projects, please visit: [southpole.com/projects](https://southpole.com/projects).  
The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions indicated on the certificate are compensated through investments in the above mentioned carbon offset projects based on international standards.

 south pole The Climate Company

## Certificate of climate protection



Gold Standard

This certificate verifies that

### 27 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

has been reduced from the atmosphere to match the unavoidable emissions as a result of the GDS Forums and CityDNA Autumn Conference, organised in Bruges, 15-18 October, 2024.

Supporting South Pole's climate action project:

**GS1354 Vietnam Small Hydro PoA - Krong No 2 Hydropower Project**

  
Dr. Daniel Klier  
CEO, South Pole



This certificate is issued by South Pole. For more information about our services and more than 700 climate protection projects, please visit: [southpole.com/projects](https://southpole.com/projects).  
The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions indicated on the certificate are compensated through investments in the above mentioned carbon offset projects based on international standards.

  
Climate  
Positive Action for Planet + People

We are delighted to confirm the retirement of  
**80 Verified Emission Reductions (VERs)**

by  
**CarbonSinkGroup**

on 03/02/2025

These credits were retired on behalf of GDS Movement.

Retired on behalf of GDS Movement

Project: GS5658 VPA 21: Access to energy for local development and women's empowerment in Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

*These credits have been retired, saving **80 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**  
from being released into the atmosphere.  
Thank you for investing in a safer climate and more sustainable world.*

[View retirement](#)

Gold Standard

Retirement certificates are hosted on the Gold Standard Impact Registry, [view your certificate](#).

Gold Standard | Chemin de Balexert 7-9 1219 Châtelineau, International Environment House 2, Switzerland | [goldstandard.org](https://goldstandard.org) +41 22 788 70 80, [help@goldstandard.org](mailto:help@goldstandard.org)



# Train Challenge

The **Train Challenge**, in partnership with CityDNA, encouraged delegates to choose sustainable travel and sharing their train journey to the conference. Through creative posts, participants emphasised the benefits of train travel while promoting the event's commitment to sustainability.

To encourage participation, a gamification approach was adopted. Delegates earned points for their social media posts based on creativity and audience interaction. Three winners received **€100 gift vouchers**, provided by Visit Bruges, for **most points, most creative, and most reactions**.



## Results

**64%** of attendees took the regional train to and/or from Bruges,

of which

**16%** travelled from and/or to Bruges only by train (international + national rail).

### The most creative post

- Bastian Hiller Teejit**

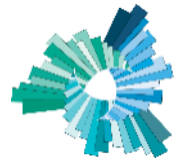
### Post with the most reactions

- Jane Cunningham Destinations International**

### Post with the most points

- Petra Stuček Ljubljana Tourism**

# Improvements and Recommendations



Area	Action
Catering and locally-sourced food	Completely eliminate red meat and aim for a 100% vegetarian catering; increase the locally sourced food to 95% of the menu.
Energy	Contract hotels that use renewable energy and that adopt energy-saving measures.
Food waste	Ensure food waste is monitored and composted, aiming to meet or exceed the 90% target of composted food.
Local suppliers	Consider increasing the percentage of local suppliers to reach 90%.
Social impact	Increase engagement with social and impact enterprises, aiming for 30% of suppliers to be social or impact enterprises.
Sustainable transportation	Encourage attendees to choose more sustainable transportation options, to and/or from the event destination.
Waste Management	Improve waste management measurement system across all venues and aim for higher diversion rate.



# Credits

This report was prepared by GDS-Movement with valuable data provided by our partners, [CityDNA](#) and [Visit Bruges Convention Bureau](#), together with our suppliers.

Event carbon and waste footprint data was measured using industry best practice methodologies as well as an advanced measurement tool called [TRACE](#). The emissions from local event production, delegate and team travel, accommodation, food and beverages, and venue are measured. Where data was not available, impact data was estimated using the GDS-Movement's database of sustainable events.

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**GDS-Movement** unites and enables tourism and event professionals to create flourishing and resilient places to visit, meet and live in.

Our mission is to co-create sustainable and circular strategies, mindsets and skill sets that will enable destinations of the future to thrive, and society and nature to regenerate.

[www.gds.earth](http://www.gds.earth)

