

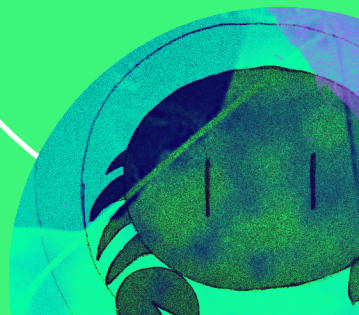
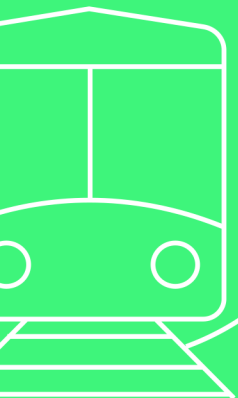
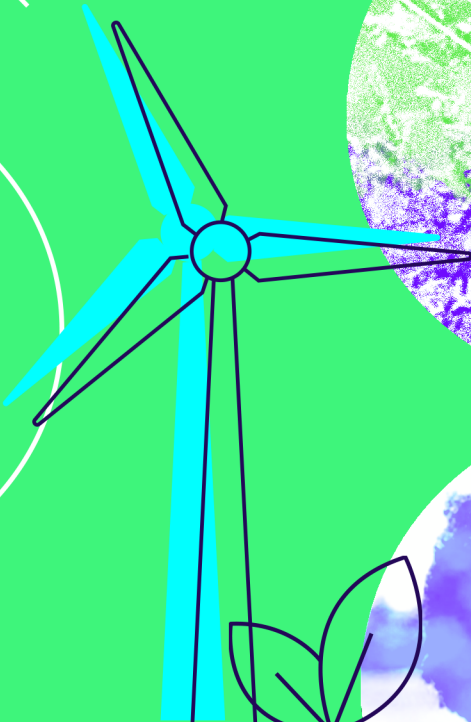
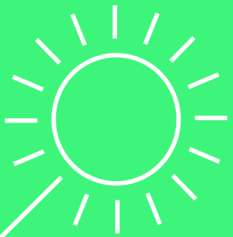


# FILM TRAVEL GRANT FUND



FESTIVALS  
DEVELOPMENT LABS  
XR SHOWCASES  
CO-PRO FORUMS

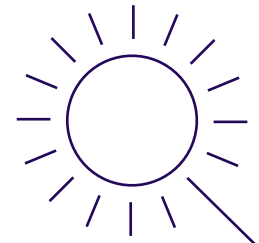
## Greener Travel Guide



# Travel Grant Fund

## Greener Travel Guide

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## Introduction

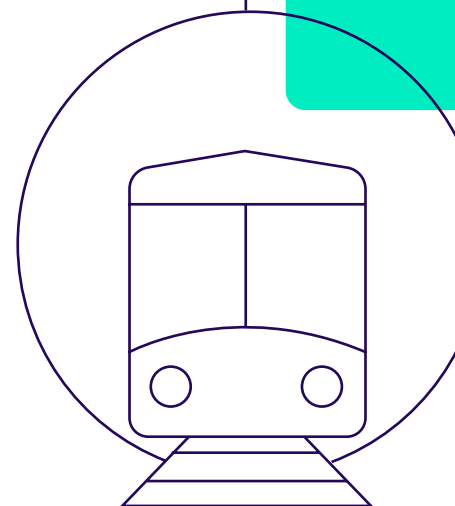
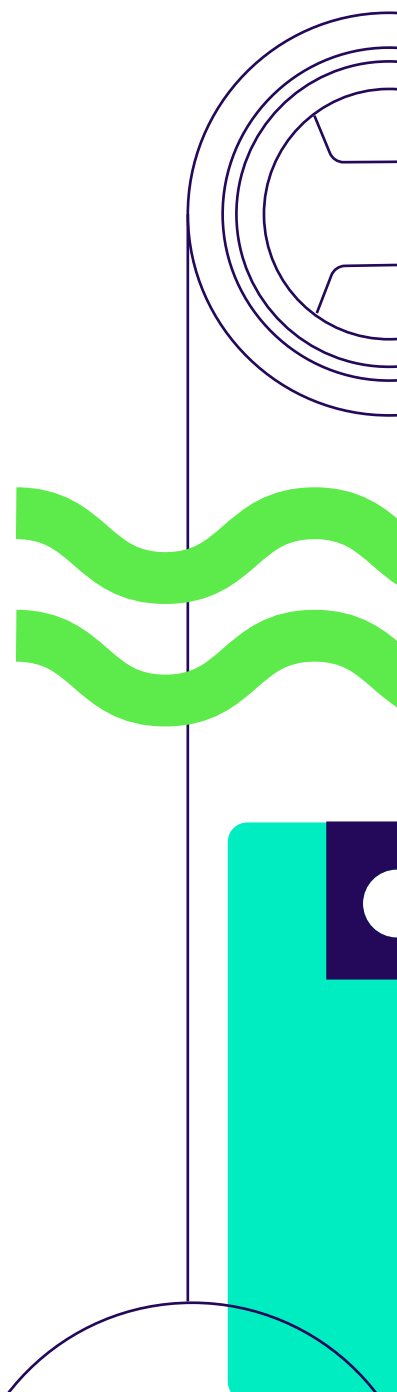
In the British Council's Film team, we have renewed our commitment to supporting filmmakers with international professional development opportunities through our **Travel Grants Fund** (in partnership with the BFI).

In contributing to the costs of travel and accommodation enabling filmmakers to attend key international festivals, co-production forums and labs, we acknowledge the environmental impact that comes with this.

Film Festivals are so vital in the lifecycle of a film and, whilst acknowledging the many benefits of hybrid models that emerged through the pandemic, attending in person can often be an irreplaceable experience.

We therefore offer this guidance to explore how we can best help filmmakers to make informed and responsible choices for greener methods of travel and to highlight the role of film festivals in being accountable and proactive cultural leaders in sustainability.

In this guide, we are not reiterating the widely established facts and figures around the damaging and irreversible effects of carbon use: there is great awareness (and particularly amongst creative communities) of the critical environmental challenges of our times. Instead, we look to highlight practical steps and individual interventions that acknowledge, and are responsive to, the reality of environmental decline; and to align with the view that the compounding effects of individual actions still hold great value in driving change.



Travel Grant funding is supported by the British Council, BFI NETWORK and the BFI International Fund.



## A note on global context

We recognise that not every country has contributed equally to climate change and some regions are experiencing the impacts of extreme weather events first hand and more than others, due to historical events and power imbalances. Every country is at a different stage of climate action and there are nuances and different reasons for this. Some countries prioritise developing climate policy and take climate action, and some countries are already facing the impacts of climate change but have actually contributed far less to the issue.

Climate change disproportionately threatens the lives and livelihoods of people living in vulnerable conditions worldwide. Local people and communities often emerge as frontline responders, both experiencing and addressing climate impacts. They have valuable knowledge, skills, and lived experience that supports climate adaptation, but often the least financial resources. Suggestions made in this guide may not be suitable for every different cultural landscape. For example, in some countries, drinking tap water may not be an option and clean water in plastic bottles may be the norm; in other countries there may not be an established country-wide recycling system so there may be no provision for separating waste.

Some of the guidance and options offered here may be easier to find across more economically solvent countries where resources allow for broader investment in environmental actions or choice – but equally where our responsibility is even greater.

**In writing this guide, we acknowledge that some recommendations such as overland travel, shared accommodation, walking and other suggestions may not be an accessible choice for everyone.**

The aim of this guide is for it to be read by grant recipients prior to attending a festival, showcase, lab or co-production forum, to consider and plan their approach to transportation, accommodation and other factors that have a bearing on individual carbon consumption. We also encourage filmmakers thinking about their festival strategy at an earlier stage, to use this guide as a resource when considering their travel plans and ahead of applying to the Travel Grant Fund. Included at the end are links to existing credited resources and tools that might be helpful in doing this.

### Get in touch

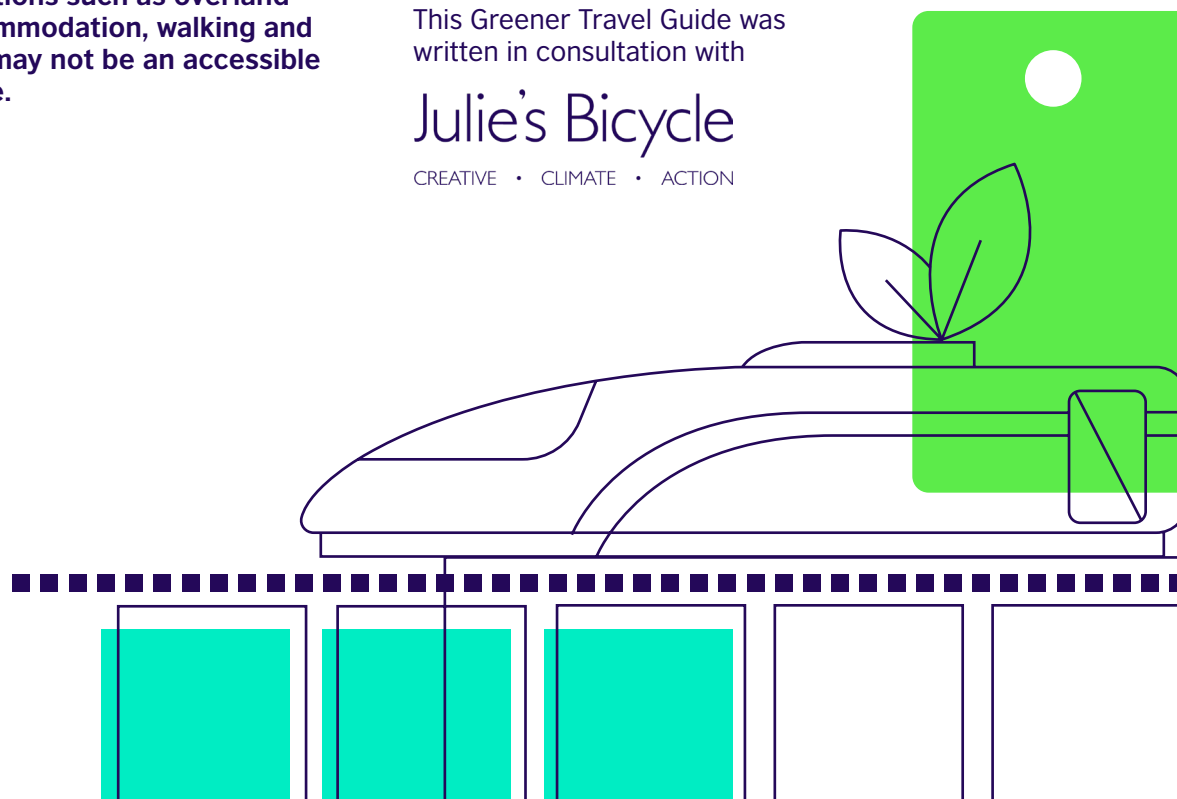
If you think there is something missing from the guide, you have an experience of greener film festival travel you'd like to share, or a new tip to offer fellow creatives, please let us know on [films@britishcouncil.org](mailto:films@britishcouncil.org)

Here you can read the British Council's [Global Environmental Sustainability Policy](#)

This Greener Travel Guide was written in consultation with

Julie's Bicycle

CREATIVE • CLIMATE • ACTION



# Top Takeaways

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## 1. Global context

Not all these sustainable good practice principles will be possible in every country where you are attending events. Due to resources, some countries are making more progress on environmental work than others. Think about what you can and can't control in the country you are travelling to. Most countries across Europe, USA should be making stronger commitments to their sustainability efforts and talking about them publicly.

## 2. Deciding to attend a festival

What are the benefits that will be gained from attending a particular festival in person? Can you attend virtually?

## 3. Greener film festivals

Look out for publicly available information about the festival's sustainability ambitions and actions. Can you find any information on the festival's website? Does the festival get in touch prior to your attendance to tell you about their sustainable initiatives and how you can support the sustainability of the event?

## 4. Travel overland

It may not always be possible, but if you are travelling to a festival in mainland Europe, aim to travel by train and/or coach. You can also receive a top-up to your grant to support any additional cost that may come with travelling by train.

## 5. If you need to fly

In the case that the festival, co-production forum or lab is held in a country where taking a flight is the only option of travel: try to choose a direct flight wherever possible, pack light as heavier luggage uses more fuel and use digital tickets and boarding passes.

## 6. Carbon compensation

Carbon offsetting should be the last action to take once all other actions to firstly reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact have been exhausted. Priority should be given to taking the most sustainable mode of transport possible. Instead of carbon offset schemes, consider donating to an environmental project or charity to compensate for the emissions produced by your travel. See how on pg 8.

## 7. Accommodation

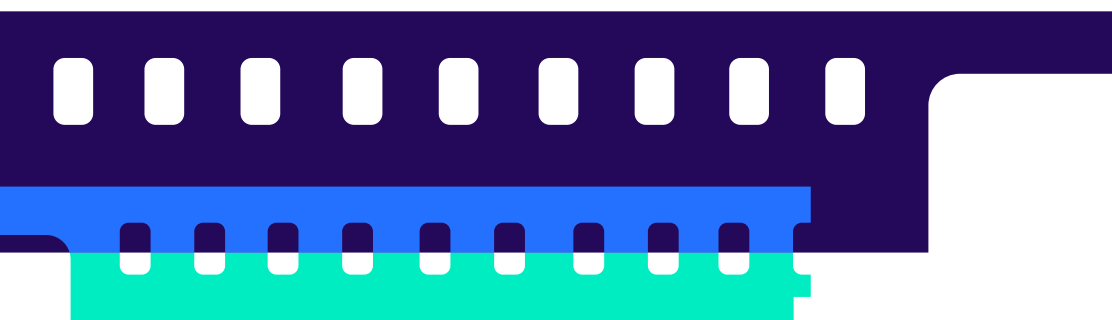
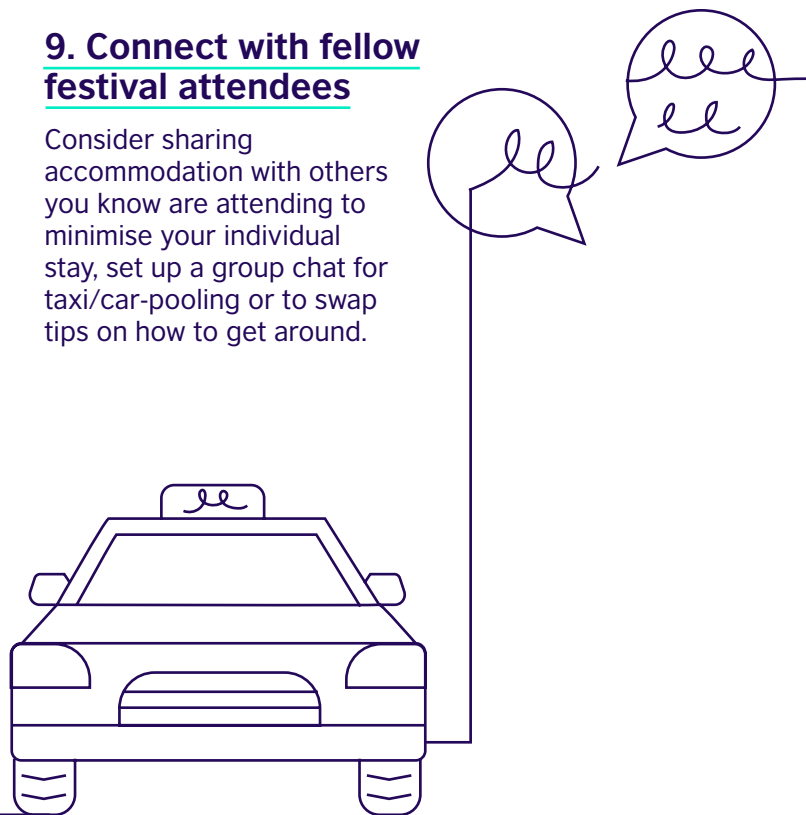
Look beyond green ratings at hotels, for specifics on their approach to sustainability, energy and waste management. Consider sharing accommodation, homestays and be mindful of the local context and ethics of popular holiday rental companies.

## 8. Keep it local

Buy, dine and travel with local businesses, contributing to the local economy.

## 9. Connect with fellow festival attendees

Consider sharing accommodation with others you know are attending to minimise your individual stay, set up a group chat for taxi/car-pooling or to swap tips on how to get around.



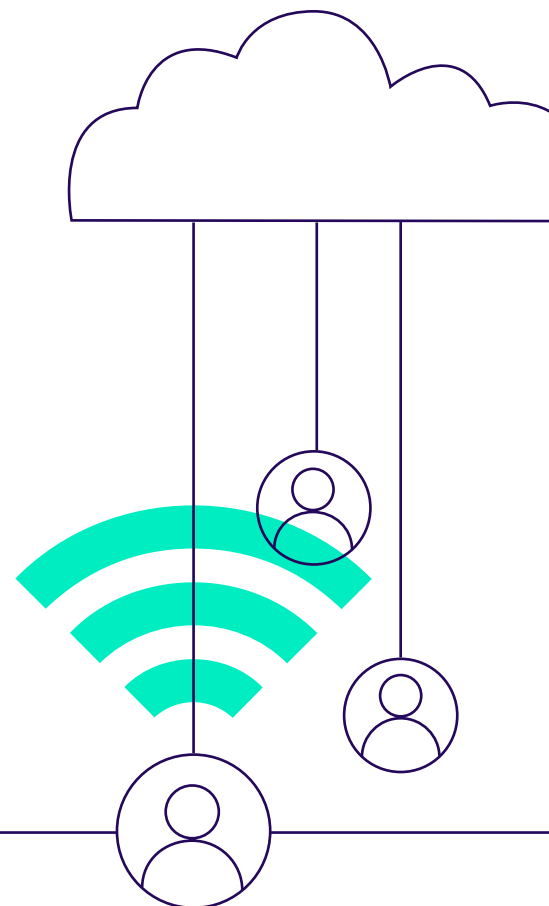
# Before you apply to the Travel Grant Fund

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Film teams can apply for up to three travel grants for a single film or immersive project per year. International travel is important for filmmakers, but not always essential. When planning your festival strategy or participation in a lab or co-production forum, consider which opportunity might offer the most benefit to you or your key creative team professionally alongside the impact of visiting that region.

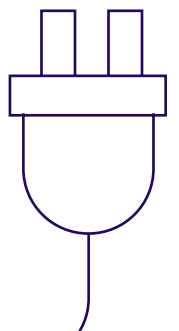
## Some considerations when planning your festival strategy:

- ▶ Would it be essential to attend this festival in person? Does the festival/event offer an online programme that you could participate in as an alternative?
- ▶ Will the co-production forum or lab have a measurable impact on the progress of your project?
- ▶ Does the festival or lab itself have a positive and proactive approach to sustainability?
- ▶ Is the event in a location that you can get to using a travel option that uses the least carbon? How many of your key creative team should attend and why?
- ▶ Would participation with your project positively impact people local to the region?
- ▶ Is it a repeat visit to the same part of the world?



“Minimising travel, and networking online has been helpful for us because there are several festivals each year that everyone goes to and those give the option to meet people in person, so when possible to have meetings with people you already know online or to meet new people online, it is better to do that.”

**Janay Boulos, filmmaker, co-production forum  
Travel Grant recipient (Hot Docs Dealmaker)**



# Greener Film Festivals

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When compiling and reviewing our key lists of **festivals and XR showcases**, **labs and co-production forums**, the British Council Film team looks at the festival organisation's approach to sustainability, within the context of the region (i.e how they might reflect the overall environmental commitment of the country they are located in).

We also try to balance a diverse range of festivals and opportunities that offer geographical reach but do not overly require long-haul travel. We look to increase the number of trips to European events to be taken by rail and offer incentives to filmmakers willing to travel overland.

When considering your participation in a film festival, it's good to be conscious of the environmental impacts of the event and to consider how the festival itself actively engages in, and promotes, sustainable action.

You can check if a film festival talks about sustainability on their website or has an official environmental policy. It's worth looking beyond a more generalised commitment to sustainability and instead assess what specific actions they take within their own festival setting, and how they might be contributing to wider sector knowledge and change. Obviously, there are many variations in **global context**, but also the individual economic differences between film festivals – but this is still a good place to start.

## Considerations for scoping out film festivals to attend:

### Practical actions

- ▶ Does the film festival have a formal sustainability policy or specific information about their environmental responsibility and commitments on their website? Is it easy to find?
- ▶ Do they provide information to help attendees access local resources, transport and accommodation?
- ▶ Does the festival mention processes for mitigating energy and water consumption and how they approach waste management?

### Practical actions continued

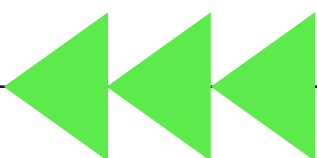
- ▶ Do they issue printed materials such as programmes or industry guides? Or digital materials only.
- ▶ Is the festival actively promoting their commitment to sustainability and offering guidance to visitors and audiences through their communication channels?

### Partnerships

- ▶ Do they work with environmentally conscious partners, sponsors and other stakeholders?
- ▶ Does the festival mention anything about the environmental impact/commitment of the venues they work with? Do any of the venues talk publicly about their environmental work?

### Programme

- ▶ Does the festival include climate themes within the festival programming? This may be in terms of films they include, curatorial strands, industry sessions and public talks?
- ▶ Does the festival represent a diversity of perspectives and indigenous voices within their programme more generally?



# Greener Travel

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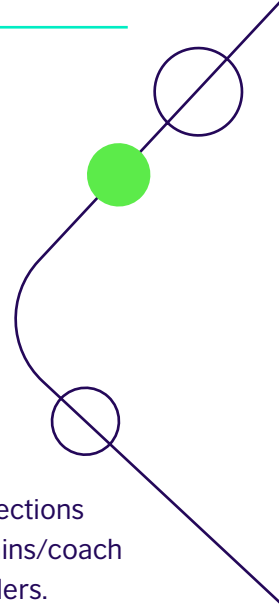
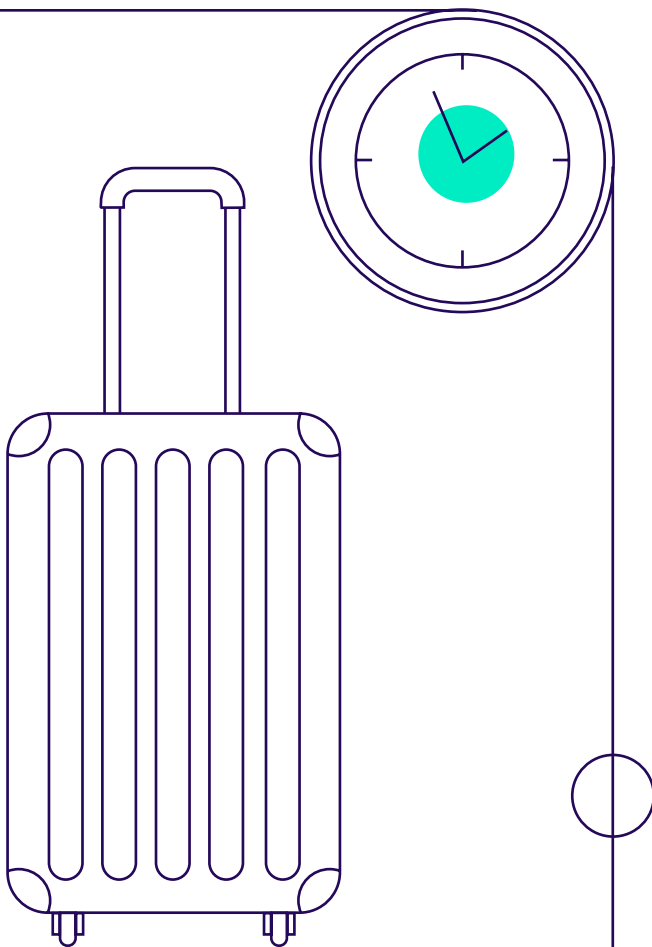
The vast difference in emissions between overland travel and flying is well documented. A flight from London to Cannes emits 191kg of carbon in comparison to 36.8kg when traveling the same distance by train ([EcoPassenger](#) is a nifty tool for comparing emissions from different travel methods). Needless to say international travel is by far the biggest factor in the level of impact your trip will have on the climate.

We hope filmmakers will consider taking the time to travel to festivals overland whenever this is possible. And of course there are many added benefits! The Travel Grants Fund can offer additional support for higher costs that may be associated with overland travel to festivals and events in Europe.

We acknowledge that for some people longer train journeys and multiple overland transfers may not be possible. For some, caring responsibilities, a disability or another factor may prevent this. For those who are able to travel overland, it's particularly worth considering this option where the choice is available to you and not to others. The festival in question may of course not be reachable overland, so we have offered up some tips on how to ensure your travel choices are as green as possible, whatever the circumstances.

## Some considerations for travelling overland:

- ▶ When booking, keep an eye on connections and leave enough time to change trains/coach and passport checks if crossing borders.
- ▶ Try to save your itinerary offline for reference in case Wi-Fi is limited and power up the portable power-bank to avoid searching for sockets and adaptors.
- ▶ Note any variations in train services depending on region. Some providers allow you to book a table seat, power sockets ahead of time and may have different coach 'classes'. Some providers (even for longer haul train journeys) do not operate catering cars so make sure you're well equipped with drinks and snacks.
- ▶ If you have a layover between trains, find out if the station has a luggage storage service (or useful luggage storage sites to check out: [stasher](#) or [luggagehero](#))
- ▶ If you can, pack light as you will be carrying luggage with you and space may be limited, and if you're travelling overnight consider a cable lock for your luggage.
- ▶ Check out online forums, discussion or social/Facebook groups for advice from previous travellers about the route you're taking.
- ▶ You can also still compensate for the carbon from your train journey (see how in our note below about carbon offsetting)



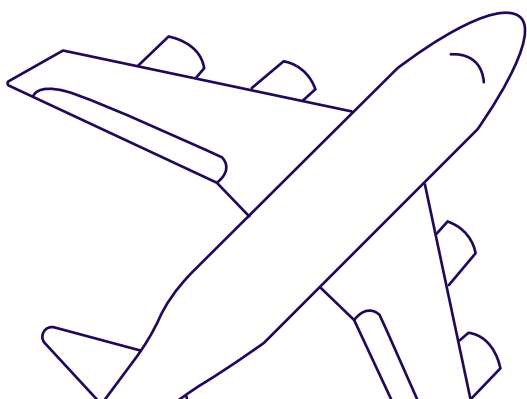
# When flying is the only option

Supporting filmmakers to attend film festivals that are a longer distance from the UK, will require some long-haul flights. There is no avoiding the fact that aviation is one of the least sustainable activities an individual can engage in, accounting for 2.5% of global CO emissions. The reality is that emissions from aviation are increasing, with few tangible solutions on the horizon for low carbon air travel.

If flying is the only option there are still some steps worth bearing in mind to reduce some of the impact of taking a flight wherever possible.

## Some considerations when booking flights:

- ▶ Wherever possible, aim to book non-stop flights, avoiding indirect routes and changes. A large percentage of a plane's fuel emissions occurs on take-off and landing.
- ▶ When choosing an airline, research those that operate lower fuel emissions, are investing in greener, more sustainable fuel types, are reducing plastic and food waste, are more transparent with consumers about their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and do not run flights if there is a low capacity.
- ▶ Some flight comparison websites indicate which flights have lower emissions (this often depends on the time of day the flight departs).
- ▶ Pack light, where possible only take what you need. Heavier luggage requires more fuel.
- ▶ Utilise digital boarding passes and apps rather than print outs
- ▶ Some airports have water refill stations, so taking an empty water bottle saves on plastic and cost!



## What about carbon offsetting?

“Offsetting is not a magic solution; many schemes fall short of their promised climate benefits and ethical credentials. Addressing emissions through offsetting often means that damaging business-as-usual behaviours continue.”

**Julie's Bicycle, (Putting a Price on Carbon)**

Although carbon 'offsetting' may still have a role to play, it does not mitigate the damaging impact of flights and Co<sub>2</sub> emissions. It can be the case that service providers do not put an accurate price on carbon and that schemes employed by corporations for carbon 'offsetting' often have limited **(or sometimes negative)** effects.

Consider measuring your own carbon footprint using the Julie's Bicycle free **online CC Tools** to accurately measure the carbon impact of your activities rather than relying on airlines or service providers and make a plan that sets out and prioritises reduction targets for your trip.

If you decide to contribute to some 'carbon compensation' and support a project which is doing valuable work to support our environment and ecosystems here's some ways to consider compensating for your carbon emissions produced from flying:

Consider investing in a local wildlife trust, either in the local area where you live or in the country that you are attending the film festival. Although this is less measurable than contributing to an 'offsetting' scheme, there is less risk of human rights abuses or poorly managed forestry projects as more of these projects are likely to be community driven. For example, where tree planting schemes create a monoculture (only planting one species of tree) this leaves the forest vulnerable to the spread of disease and doesn't contribute to creating healthy, biodiverse forests.



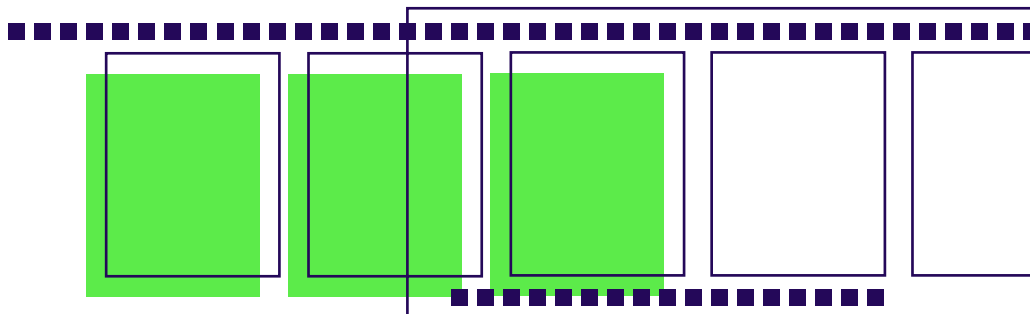
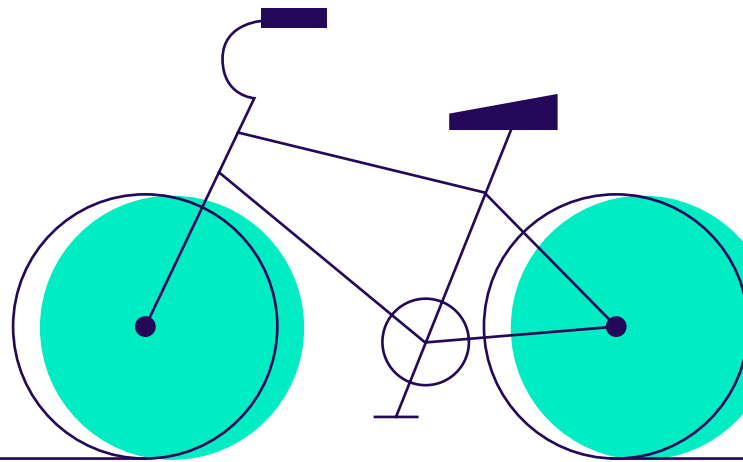
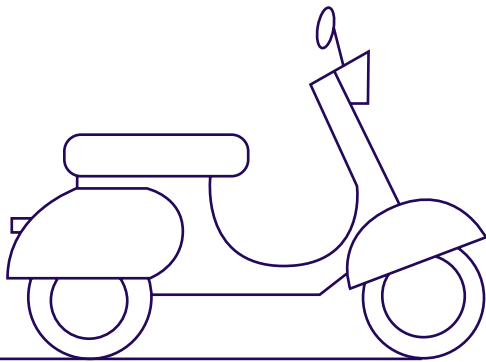
# Local travel

Alongside international transport options, it's good to think about how you might get around during the festival itself.



## Considerations for local travel:

- ▶ Get familiar with distances ahead of time. Walking in unfamiliar places sometimes needs a bit of planning ahead, nailing the best route and finding a decent navigation option.
- ▶ Investigate how ticketing works locally and where tickets can be booked and purchased – different countries operate very varied systems.
- ▶ If an option for you, check out bike or scooter hire companies in the neighbourhood and see if there are safe bike routes offered.
- ▶ Check the festival website for advice on local transport options and venue maps. Some bigger festivals may offer a shuttle service between venues. Speak to your festival representative for local guidance and tips.
- ▶ If you are travelling from airports, major train stations or ports, there is sometimes a local bus or shuttle service between arrival terminals and the city centre – and it is often both cheaper and quicker than a taxi.
- ▶ If you do need to get a taxi, consider those that offer electric cars and/or vehicles with lower emissions. Download the app or save the number for the local green cab company ahead of travelling. Go for locally owned taxi companies over large international providers.
- ▶ Carpooling or car sharing is a good option, especially if you are travelling with a group or know other people who will be attending the same event. Set up a messaging group ahead of time and keep in touch about sharing travel options throughout your stay.



# Greener Accommodation

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Where you stay when you travel can have a big effect on your carbon footprint and planning for a greener accommodation option can be a super effective way to lower the impact of your visit. Considering sharing with fellow filmmakers travelling to the same festival.

## Hotels

Look beyond 'green ratings' communicated by hotels or through popular booking platforms and try to find out what tangible, pro-active action the hotel takes in practice. This may include a policy on recycling, turning off lights and not changing sheets and towels every day. Does the hotel go further? For example, are they committed to zero plastic use, rather than just recycling. How does the hotel contribute to the local environment and economy? Do they provide anything in the room like a reusable water bottle, are there reminders to guests about laundry (such as not washing towels or bed linen every day), do they provide toiletries in low waste methods (such as reusable containers, or large room use bottles as opposed to individual minis).

Larger, more 'luxury' hotels may have more to spend on marketing their sustainability, but often it's smaller, local hotels with lower star ratings that come up top on sustainability as waste reduction is tied into their own economic sustainability as a small business.

## Apartments

Opting to stay in an apartment can be a great choice for helping to lower your carbon footprint – making your own food, reusing towels, sheets and kitchen utensils etc certainly has positive benefits. The owner or management company's approach to sustainability should still be clearly communicated and present.

Given the rise in popularity of apartment stays, it is also important to be mindful of the wider local context. The proliferation of privately owned accommodation or 'tourist rentals' may well be impacting the cost of housing and pricing local people out of living in the area.

Sharing accommodation such as an apartment with fellow filmmakers or industry guests can sometimes result in great networking potential and/or a 'festival buddy' with whom to navigate the festival.

**“Sharing accommodation with fellow filmmakers or your team members is a great solution. And booking early always helps”**

**Tara Agdashloo, filmmaker,  
Festival Travel grant recipient**

## Homestays

The opportunity to stay with local people in their homes not only reduces your carbon footprint significantly but can also create a stronger connection overall with the local area, knowledge and community - and can sometimes result in friends for life! Safety is of course key to homestays, and the first stop would be asking if the festival has recommendations or a matchmaking programme - or to consider an accredited option.

### Some considerations for a greener stay:

- ▶ Does the accommodation provider have a sustainability statement that is specific, achievable and proactive? Is it easy to find on their website?
- ▶ Do they mention any energy efficiency measures in the design of the building?
- ▶ Do they have any renewable energy sources on the building? (e.g. solar panels?)
- ▶ Do they take efforts to reduce the amount of waste they produce and is actively improving their recycling/composting rates?
- ▶ Is your accommodation choice located close to public transport?

# On The Ground

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Once you are there, there's lots of simple ways you can lessen your impact day-to-day during your visit to a film festival. Alongside local travel options that lessen impact on congestion and air pollution in towns and cities, it's good to be thoughtful about how you can positively engage with the local economy and community.

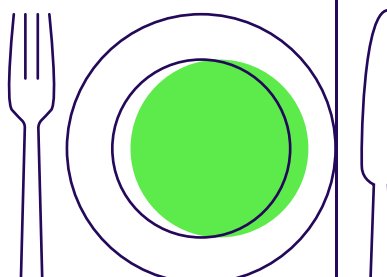
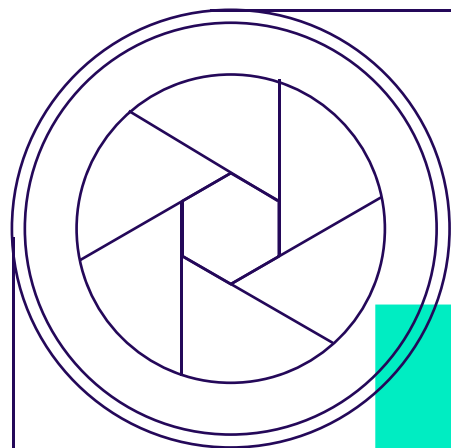
## Some considerations on the ground:

- ▶ Get a head-start and see what is in your local surroundings before going
- ▶ Where possible, consider buying food, drinks and other produce from local markets / artisans / shops to support the local economy and community
- ▶ Arrange your dinner meet ups at locally owned, independent restaurants rather than chains
- ▶ Making and taking your own food when out and about and being mindful of waste
- ▶ If promoting your film screening/s on the ground, think twice about flyers and printed materials - utilise social media, word of mouth and networking events instead. If you are printing, one poster can go a lot further than multiple flyers.
- ▶ Buddy up with a local filmmaker and get the inside track and local knowledge

Joining a shared messaging group (like Whatsapp or Signal) with other filmmakers can be an excellent tool for sharing and receiving information on local travel, where to hire a bike, taxi shares - as well as info about your screenings and events! Before you attend a festival or event with a grant, the British Council team will connect you with other grantee filmmakers attending the same festival via email and encourage you to get in touch with one another ahead of your trip.

## Spread the word

Consider using your platform as a festival attendee to share how you engaged in a sustainable way: help to pave the way and share your learnings and experiences with other filmmakers (and with the British Council, by tagging [@britisharts](#)). Your visit can also encourage festivals to demonstrate and continue to assess their sustainability practices – where possible engage in feedback to help them improve and celebrate where you think they have been successful.



# Further Reading and Guidance

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## Useful links for carbon compensation:

### ▶ [Choose Earth](#)

Supports indigenous communities in Brazil. They work directly with indigenous leaders to protect indigenous knowledge of how to steward the land in harmony with nature. Also working with grassroots communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis, providing support to those who have been displaced from climate-related issues.

### ▶ [Onboard Earth Travel Calculator](#)

Can use this platform to calculate the carbon impact of your journeys. The platform also provides the opportunity to 'compensate' for your emissions through certified, community-led renewable energy and nature restoration and protection projects.

### ▶ [Green the UK](#)

Works with lots of local UK based wildlife and nature projects and charities and may provide you with some inspiration of organisations you could support as part of your carbon compensation.

### ▶ [Thousand Year Trust](#)

Working to support research into protecting and growing temperate rainforests in the UK, a critically important ecosystem.

For more information and tips on carbon offsetting take a look at [Julie's Bicycle Putting a Price on Carbon Report](#).

## Useful links for travelling overland:

- ▶ [Trainline](#)
- ▶ [RailNinja](#)
- ▶ [Seat61](#)
- ▶ [Slowtravel](#)
- ▶ [Rome2Rio](#)
- ▶ [@noflytravelclub](#)
- ▶ [Bahn.com](#)
- ▶ [@bywaytravel](#)
- ▶ [RailEurope](#)
- ▶ [Accessible train travel in UK and Europe \(raileurope.com\)](#)

## Planning and tracking tools from Julie's Bicycle:

### ▶ [Julie's Bicycle Creative Climate Tools](#)

Covers a variety of impacts and is particularly useful for tracking and recording travel impacts over time, as calculations can be saved to your account, particularly useful are the free online carbon calculator and '[Business Travel Template](#)' download.

## Initiatives for greener storytelling

### ▶ [BAFTA Albert](#)

### ▶ [Julie's Bicycle - BFI Sustainable Screen Resource Hub](#)

### ▶ [Torino Green Film Lab](#)

### ▶ [Climate Spring](#)

### ▶ [Doc Society's Climate Story Unit](#)

## Further reading:

- ▶ [Europe is Burning - Can Film Fests Adapt to Climate Change?](#)
- ▶ [On Greening Film Festivals \(NECSUS Roundtable\)](#)
- ▶ [Disability Care and Climate \(Julie's Bicycle\)](#)
- ▶ [Can Touring be Environmentally Responsible? \(Lift Festival\)](#)
- ▶ [UN Sustainability Goals](#)