

# The Regenerative Revolution

A new paradigm for event management

October 2020 | #NATUREWORKS

imex GROUP

Marriott  
INTERNATIONAL



2020/21  
TALKING  
POINT

NATURE

# 2020

#Natureworks - An ecosystem of event success



# OUR MISSION:

**The IMEX Group has just one mission:** to unite and advance the meetings industry – doing everything it can to educate, innovate and help everyone in the business events industry make powerful connections with the right people. The IMEX team serves this mission, and the industry we love, by delivering two market-leading trade shows every year; one in Frankfurt each spring and one in Las Vegas each autumn.

**The Global Destination Sustainability Movement,** (GDS-Movement) unites and enables destination management 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 to thrive, and society and nature to regenerate.

**Marriott International, Inc.** encompasses a portfolio of more than 7,400 properties under 30 leading brands spanning 135 countries and territories. Marriott operates and franchises hotels and licenses vacation ownership resorts all around the world.

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## Disclaimer

This report is based on research carried out between January and July 2020. Whilst this report has been sponsored, the analysis is completely unbiased.



**This extraordinary planet**, home to billions of species and giver of all things needed for life to flourish is sending a powerful message to humanity during these troubled and threatening times. For us to survive and thrive we must care for nature for we are an intrinsic part of the cycle that governs all existence. It's time to wake up, take notice, raise our voices and our hopes. →

**WELCOME TO**  
**#NATURE**WORKS



AN ECO  
SYSTEM OF  
EVENT  
SUCCESS

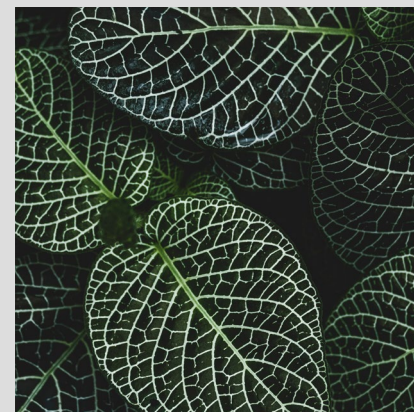


//

It's time to build back better  
for People and Planet."

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES,  
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL

#NATUREWORKS





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## Why#NATUREWORKS

**LATE LAST YEAR** when we decided to make NATURE our Talking Point for 2020, we had no idea how prescient we were being. Just three months into 2020, every human being on this planet was starting to experience the enormous power of nature at a microscopic level. How humbling that has been.

### SMELLING THE FLOWERS

But this enforced 'Great Pause' has given many of us time to see our world differently. We have had time to literally smell the flowers, appreciate the birds; the trees, skies, valleys, ocean, deserts, and our own gardens, balcony or window views. In simple terms, time to reconnect with, and often be, revived by, nature.

This report is our effort to bring a fearless conversation to the fore. Its premise is that this natural world, the planet we all call home, is not an endless source of supply. IMEX, like many others, believes now is the time to change our relationship with nature. To think differently about what we take, what we make, what we use and what we do, or don't, throw away.

A healthy and abundant future for all requires a new mindset, a new heart and a new model. This report explains why - and how.

### LEADING EDGE OF CHANGE

We believe the global meetings and events industry has an important part

Here we are, arguably the most intelligent being that's ever-walked planet Earth, with this extraordinary brain...and yet we're destroying the only home we have"

DR JANE GOODALL

## FOREWORD

to play in making these changes.

Our industry is full of people who care about people and who care deeply about making event and meeting experiences memorable, valuable and innovative. The leading edge of change is available to all of us and it can start with a few small tweaks in our behaviour, our processes and, above all, our thinking.

I am enormously grateful to Marriott International for supporting this research and to author, Guy Bigwood, Chief Changemaker and Managing Director of the GDS Movement. Readers should know that further complementary articles will follow courtesy of Janet Sperstad (CMP), Faculty Director, Event Management Business Solutions Madison College and Professor Amanda Cecil (PhD, CMP), Department of Tourism, Event and Sport Management, Indiana University.

I'll leave you with this quote from Dr Jane Goodall. You may think it bleak. I take heart from it. "Here we are, arguably the most intelligent being that's ever-walked planet Earth, with this extraordinary brain ...and yet we're destroying the only home we have".


It's time for us to awaken that intelligence, asking nature how to heal and to learn from its principles of abundance and regeneration.

A healthy living system is a prosperous and successful one. I look to a future that offers us all that promise realised by the industry we are all a part of.

**Carina Bauer,**  
CEO, IMEX Group



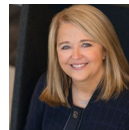




Travellers around the world share a responsibility to consider how we all can adapt and find solutions to the issues at hand".

## FOREWORD

### FOREWORD FROM TAMMY ROUTH



SENIOR VICE  
PRESIDENT  
of Global Sales,  
Marriott  
International

**THIS IS A** time of unprecedented change across the meetings industry. Marriott International is steadfast in our commitment to work with industry organisations like IMEX to find ways to instil trust and confidence in meetings and events. We are proud to partner with them on the Regenerative Revolution study focusing on how the industry can keep nature and sustainability practices top of mind as we go through this transformative time together.

Cleanliness and service standards have always been our hallmarks, and now those deep convictions are more important than ever. With the current challenges presented by COVID-19, coupled with scarcer natural resources, shifting weather patterns, and the negative impacts from a disposable culture, travellers around the world share a responsibility to consider how we all can adapt and find solutions to the issues at hand.

Travel can and should be a force for good. Marriott has a circular economy strategy that is designed to assist hotels in designing out, reducing, and recycling waste in environmentally sound and cost-effective manners. Rethinking negative impacts, and regenerating nature and communities will allow those amazing destinations we depend on to remain vibrant and flourishing places that others wish to come back to again and again.



At Marriott, we remain focused on providing the best possible meeting and event experience while helping to address the unique concerns of this time.

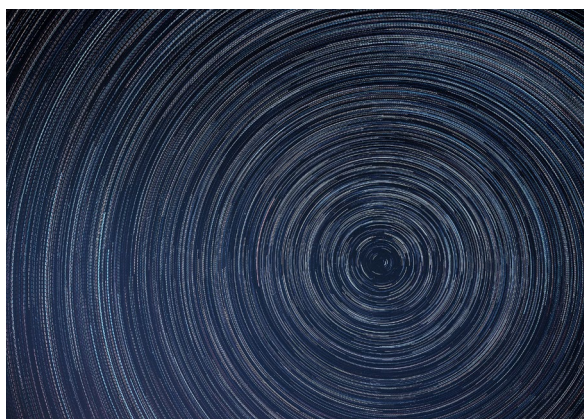
For more information and resources related to Marriott International's meeting and event offerings, visit **[marriottbonvoyevents.com](https://marriottbonvoyevents.com)**.

Marriott International is proud to sponsor this research; we hope you find it informative and useful to your own businesses and organisations.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Living through a paradigm shift →



**T**HE COVID-19 CRISIS has had a profound and disastrous impact on our society and industry. The global meetings and events industry has collapsed with millions of workers being furloughed or losing their businesses and jobs. At the same time, protests over social injustice around the world are refocusing awareness on another deadly pandemic; racism and the lack of social justice, inclusivity and equality in our society.

As a result, all our paradigms of normality are being challenged, and we are being forced into an epoch of rapid change, accelerated innovation and unimagined creativity. The resulting hypergrowth of online meetings and working from home, combined with the current collapse of face to face events and the continual uncertainty due to COVID-19 is causing the \$1.5 trillion meetings and events **industry**<sup>1</sup> to question its future and ability to recover. ►

EXECUTIVESUMMARY





## The Regenerative Revolution:

**THIS IS THE** first in a series of **#Natureworks** research papers. It explores and asserts that for the global meetings and events industry to recover, flourish and thrive in a future world, we must resist the temptation of adopting COVID-19 recovery strategies based on a wish to return to the 'normal' of the past.

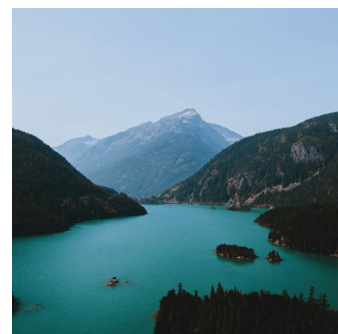
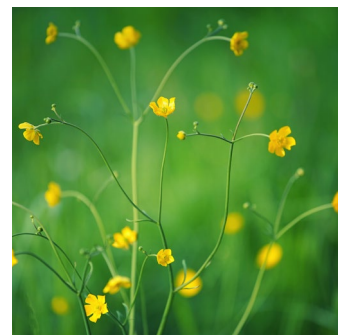
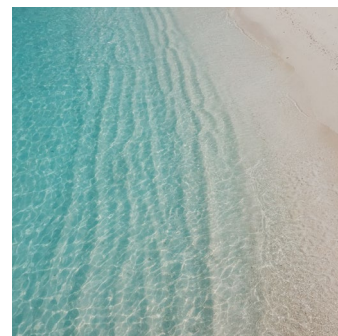
Instead we must use the pandemic as a 'great reset' to rethink, reimagine and redesign a new restorative, resilient, inclusive and zero carbon growth model. By doing so we can restore and rejuvenate the planet, its people and create a

healthier economy, rather than seeking to sustain what no longer functions.

This deep cultural and systemic transformation requires a paradigm shift in beliefs, values and business models. We as an industry can evolve, and transition to a new cultural and economic system that values nature, stops taking it for granted and recognises that we depend on nature more than nature depends on us. This shift will enable heightened resilience when faced with the further risks of climate change, biodiversity collapse and social unrest. We call it the **Regenerative Revolution**.



## EXECUTIVESUMMARY

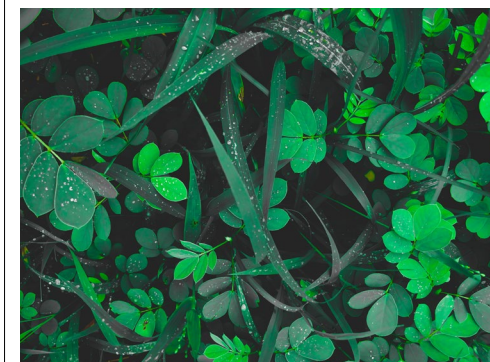


ABILITY TO RECOVER

**\$1.5** trillion

COVID-19 is causing the \$1.5 trillion meetings and events industry to question its future and ability to recover.

## Time to step up and scale up:



**FAR FROM PUSHING** the sustainability agenda to the bottom of the list, the current state of the world makes the business case for immediate action more relevant than ever. To guarantee the future success of our industry **post-COVID-19**, requires commitment and collaboration to innovate at unprecedented speed and scale. We need to develop new business models; accelerate sustainable product design; foster new private, public, people partnerships (4Ps); educate and develop professionals; and raise funding to accelerate our industry's transformation.





Regenerative events have a focus on quality, effectiveness, harmony, and wellness."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# A REGENERATIVE FUTURE, INSPIRED BY NATURE

**THIS REPORT IS** intended to be provocative. It shares ideas, principles and success stories from the events and other industries with a goal to inspire the reader to action. Our research draws upon inspiration and ideas from the realms of nature-inspired design (biophilia, biomimicry), indigenous wisdom, and the principles of the circular economy.

This inspiration from nature and living systems thinking has motivated us to develop an experimental framework for regenerative event design and management, called Hannuwa.

Regenerative events have a focus on quality, effectiveness, harmony and wellness. They are circular by design aiming for energy, natural resources and materials to be conserved, enriched, reused, recycled and used to enhance equitable development. They design out waste and pollution, and improve resilience by increasing diversity, inclusivity and equality. They also focus on regenerating and rejuvenating natural systems and communities.

This initial draft of Hannuwa consists of four key principles and an eight-step methodology which serves to inspire, educate and guide event professionals on their transition to more regenerative and circular event management. The result is an approach where event planning, resourcing, procurement and production are designed and managed to optimise ecosystem functioning and human wellbeing.



## TAKING THE FIRST STEP



**A KEY PURPOSE** of our research is to pose important questions to the meetings and events industry that catalyse dialogue and stimulate debate and collaboration.

**How can we** break down barriers, reinvent business models and collaborate to build more resilience into our companies, events, communities and the biosphere?

**How can we** co-create a thriving industry that addresses global challenges, such as inequality, plastic pollution and climate change, and at the same time create employment, generate income and benefit society?

**How can we** speed and scale up innovation at an unprecedented level to accelerate sustainable product and service design, stimulate the development of new materials and technologies, and develop the professionals who can deliver the transition?

We are called to be architects  
of the future, not its victims"

BUCKMINSTER FULLER

## IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

**The scientists<sup>2</sup>** have issued a warning; we have less than 10 years to reverse our path toward extinction.

At this point in time, where most businesses in the meetings and events industry are focused on survival, sustainability may not seem like a priority. However we have the technologies and solutions at hand to both reboot the events industry and rebuild businesses that contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **The question is do we have the leadership?**

This report provides principles and a framework to enable stronger leadership and serves as an invitation to the global meetings and events industry to step into its power as a regenerative ecosystem that can reinvent itself. Without doubt, it is a call for awareness and action.

It's important to remember that in every crisis there is an opportunity to adapt and evolve. Imagine if out of this crisis we co-create a beautiful future with jobs and an inclusive economy, resilient and equitable communities, healthy people and a thriving planet.

## EXECUTIVESUMMARY





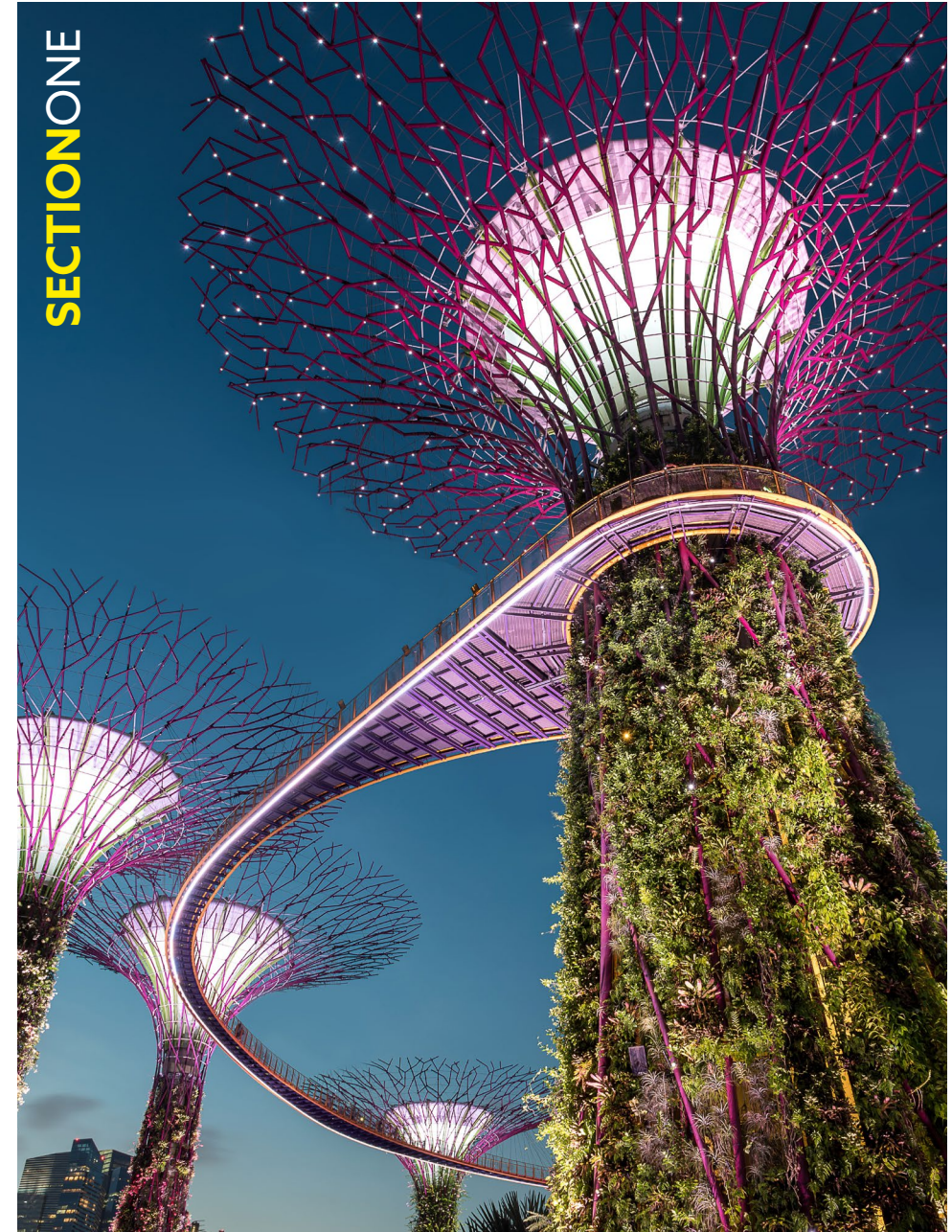


**"THE WORD REGENERATIVE** means creating the conditions conducive for life to continuously renew itself, to transcend into new forms, and to flourish amid ever-changing life-conditions." →

Regenerative Leadership by  
Giles Hutchins + Laura Storm<sup>3</sup>.

RENEW, TRANSCEND AND  
FLOURISH

# TIME TO RETHINK, REIMAGINE AND REGENERATE





## RETHINK, REIMAGINE, AND REDESIGN



**COVID-19** has showed that our foundations of prosperity are precarious. The pandemic is highlighting both the negative and positive impacts of the global meetings and events industry. Amplifying the social and economic value of face to face meetings but also shining a light on the linear development model of our industry, which is proving to be neither resilient, nor sustainable in the face of the crisis.

It's no longer good enough to talk about returning to business as usual. The world has changed, and we need to transform our industry to become even better at contributing to the social, economic and ecosystems upon which we depend. This is not a call to repair the old, and patch what's already broken, but to rethink, reimagine and redesign the new, and implement circular, regenerative and nature-based solutions in the process.



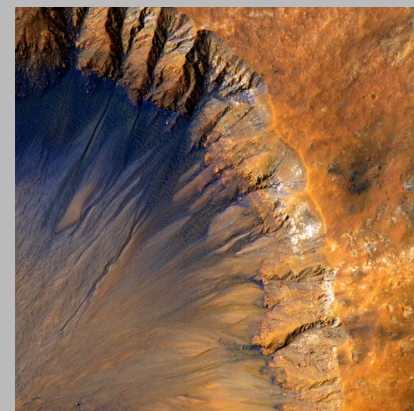
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“

A return to 'business as usual' would not just be a monumental failure of imagination, but lock in the inequities laid bare by the pandemic and the inevitability of more devastating crises due to climate breakdown”

C40 MAYORS AGENDA FOR  
A GREEN AND JUST RECOVERY<sup>4</sup>





## REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL?



**2019 WAS A** tipping point for sustainability. Greta Thunberg and her **movement** of over **13 million** supporters were protesting in the streets, corporates like Microsoft were making massive commitments to be **carbon negative**; and over **1,737** cities and governments in **30** countries declared a **climate emergency**.

The global meetings and events industry responded positively, and there was a surge of commitments, demand and new initiatives from organisations and professionals in our sector. In the research for this report, over **1,500** event organisers and suppliers responded to our industry survey. The results in **January 2020** (pre-pandemic) showed that **90%** of respondents agreed that an increasing focus on sustainability was important for the events industry. **79%** of respondents stated that they had increased their focus on making

## SECTION ONE

their events more sustainable, and a staggering **97%** of organisations had implemented some form of event sustainability initiative.

In May, whilst the world grappled with the impacts of COVID-19 these questions were asked again during **#PlanetIMEX**. This time, **95%** said their organisations were committed to developing more sustainable practices (an increase of **5%**). **92%** said that it was important that sustainability was integrated into the industry reboot and recovery plans.

However only **12%** respondents said that their business had an advanced sustainability strategy. **49%** said they were only just beginning the journey, and **42%** have not even started considering circularity in how they organise their events.



## Is this enough?

The **COVID-19 focus** on safety and economic recovery is already challenging much of the progress our industry has made over the years on sustainability issues, and threatening our contribution to the **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

In 2015, United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which specified 17 SDGs. The SDGs define global sustainable development priorities and aspirations for 2030. They seek to mobilise global efforts among governments, business and civil society to end poverty and hunger, and create a life of dignity and opportunity for all, within the boundaries of the planet.

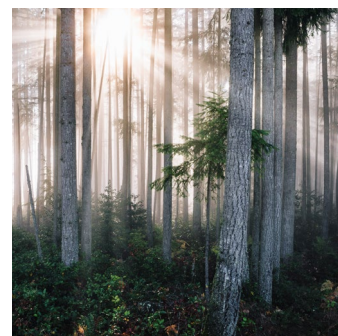
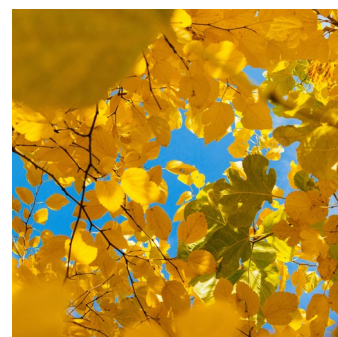
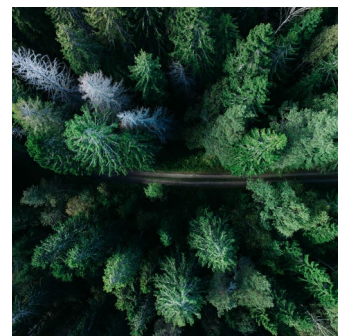
Despite the hardships of the pandemic, we must not lose sight of the bigger risks

presented by climate change and biodiversity collapse. These will further impact and reduce our industry's efforts to become future fit and resilient. 2020 will again break records for global heating, with Arctic temperatures hitting 33°C (91°F) in August<sup>5</sup>, and unprecedented wildfires raging across North America, Australia, the Amazon and Siberia.

The planet is on track to heat by 3.2°C (37.8°F) by the end of the century, warn scientists<sup>6</sup>. At this rate melting ice caps, rising sea levels, increasing numbers of extreme weather events and mass climate migration will become the norm. This is not good for the events sector as it will lead to disruptions in transport, infrastructure, agriculture, and other essential services that we depend on.



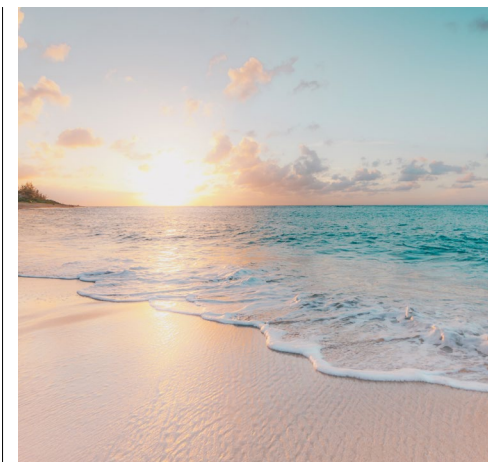
## SECTION ONE



REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS

# 45%

The events industry is working to reduce its emissions by approximately **45%** by 2030



**THE UN 2016 Paris Agreement** signed by **189** countries, set a goal to limit the increase in global average temperature to **1.5°C (34.7°F)**.

To achieve this goal the events industry needs to play a key part in the global transition to a zero-carbon economy, and to work to reduce its emissions by approximately **45%** by **2030**, reaching net zero by **2050**<sup>7</sup>. These big targets are too large to be solved by the abandonment of planes, trains and automobiles. They require an urgent and major shift to renewable energy, transformative energy efficiency initiatives and a transition to zero carbon transport.

By doing so it is estimated that there can be a reduction of up to **55%** in global emissions. The remaining **45%** would need to come from transforming the way we make, grow, consume and use **products**<sup>8</sup>.

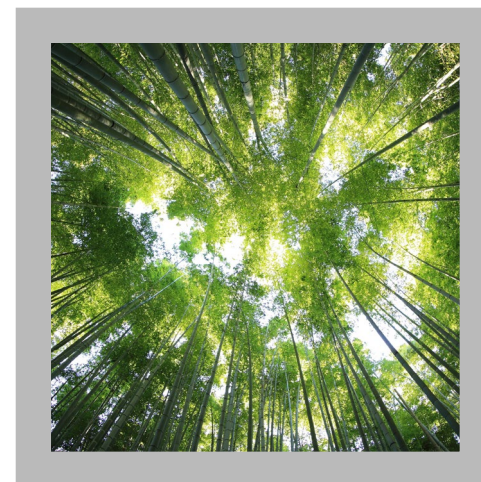


How ill prepared human civilisation is to manage major global shocks.



**Overall, the crisis** has exposed how ill prepared human civilisation is to manage major global shocks. This is critical, as the global consequences of climate breakdown and the breach of other planetary boundaries threaten to be even more severe than the COVID-19 pandemic"

C40 MAYORS AGENDA FOR  
A GREEN AND JUST RECOVERY



SECTION ONE



## THERE ARE LIMITS TO GROWTH



# 100

Every year more than **100 billion** metric tonnes of raw materials are extracted and converted into products.



# 8.6%

Less than **8.6%** of these materials are recycled back into the economy<sup>9</sup>.

# 30%

While millions go hungry, **30%** of the food we produce is wasted<sup>10</sup>.

# 3



We will require the resources of nearly three Earth-sized planets<sup>12</sup> to support the consumption of an expected global population of **10.9 billion** people<sup>13</sup>.

This creates a stunning **6%** of global emissions, more than double the **emissions**<sup>11</sup> produced from flying.



# 70%

By **2050** annual waste generation is projected to increase by **70%**

# 6%

SECTION ONE



#### The Numbers

We need to  
rethink plastic:



242<sub>m</sub>

IN 2016, 242 MILLION  
metric tonnes of plastic waste  
were generated globally<sup>14</sup>.

3.8%

Research estimates that  
across its lifecycle, plastic  
accounts for 3.8% of global  
greenhouse gas emissions<sup>14</sup>.

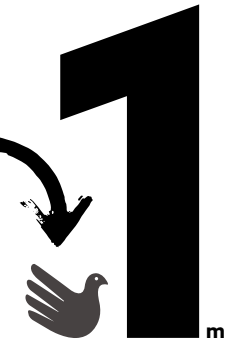
11<sub>m</sub>

Today a whopping 91%  
of plastic isn't recycled,  
with a staggering 11 million  
metric tonnes entering  
the oceans each year.

AS A RESULT  
OF THIS waste up  
to **one million**  
seabirds, **100,000**  
sea mammals,  
marine turtles  
and countless fish  
die every year.



WHAT'S WORSE  
IS THAT this annual  
flow to the oceans  
is predicted to triple  
to **29 million** metric  
tonnes by 2040<sup>15</sup>.



COVID-19 hygiene  
responses have seen  
a massive increase in  
the use of single-use  
plastic, with consumption  
growth estimated at  
**250-300%** in America  
since the virus took hold.



#### Talking point

According to a forecast from Grand View Research,  
the global disposable-mask  
market alone will grow from  
an estimated **\$800 million** in  
**2019** to **\$166 billion** in **2020**.  
There are some reports  
predicting there will be more  
facemasks in the sea than  
jellyfish<sup>16</sup>. →

#### SECTION ONE



It is important that our industry doesn't attempt to repair what's broken, but takes the chance to rethink and redesign the new."

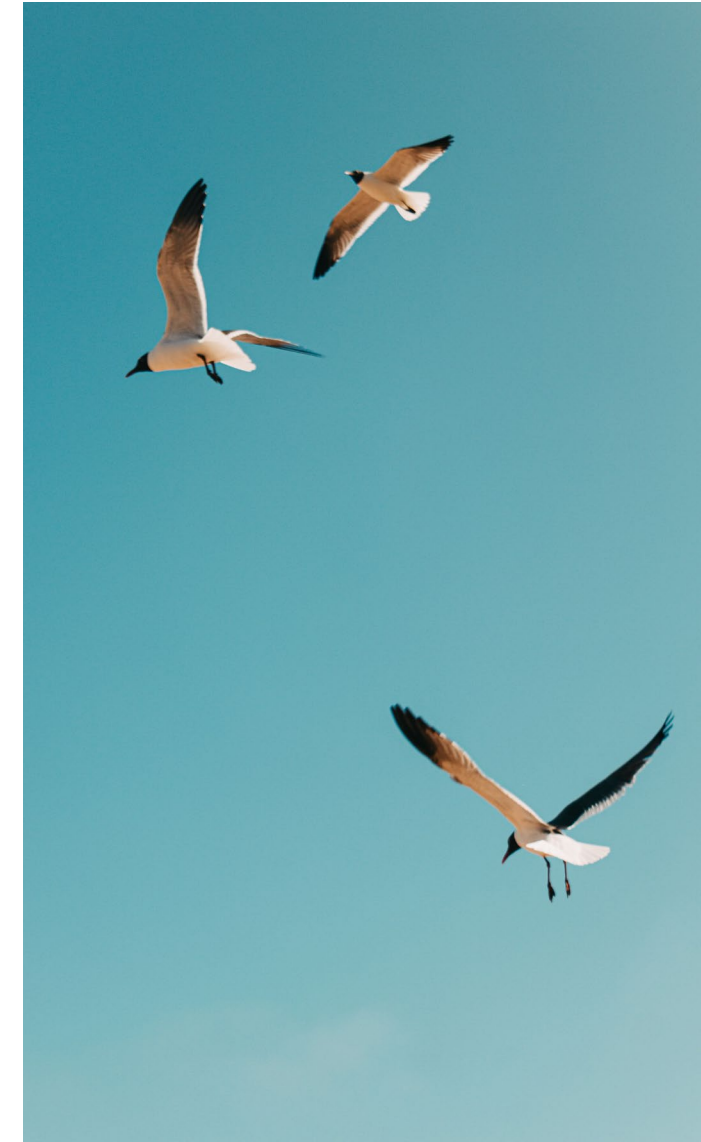
## SECTION ONE

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

**AVIATION PRODUCES APPROXIMATELY 2.4%** of total global carbon emissions and increased 32% in the last five years<sup>17</sup>. In 2019, events attracted a great deal of public pressure about their role in generating carbon emissions gained through flying.

Until COVID-19, flying was the elephant in the room. Now with the collapse of aviation and the need to meet online, we must use the pandemic to reflect not only on how much we fly, but also on how we use and dispose of resources. Our research has shown that global emissions from plastic usage and food consumption/wastage are more than those generated through aviation, and for many events are at least equal to flying.

The big pivot to take our meetings and events online, has led to phenomenal innovation to improve the online user experience. We have seen four years of IT development and culture shift in just six months. Already there are many stories of collaboration and accelerated development (see **PlanetIMEX** as an example) that demonstrate rapid innovation and transformative change is possible and achievable when they must be made.





## THE PRICELESS VALUE OF NATURE



**CONFINEMENT HAS MADE** us question our relationship with nature, and to increasingly appreciate our time outdoors. It has forced many of us to question how we consume “stuff”, how much we travel, and our impacts on the planet’s health. It has made us think about the vital work done by many at the marginalised end of society, and the importance of friends, family and local community.

What has and is becoming increasingly clear through the pandemic is how social conditions, the economy, our health, and wellbeing are interconnected and interdependent on nature and its services. We are increasingly appreciating and understanding that not only is nature our resource

**“At a time** when the world is reeling from the deepest global disruption and health crisis of a lifetime, there is unequivocal and alarming evidence that nature is unravelling and that our planet is flashing red warning signs of vital natural systems failure. Humanity’s increasing destruction of nature is having catastrophic impacts not only on wildlife populations but also on human health and all aspects of our lives.”

Marco Lambertini, Director General WWF International

## SECTION ONE

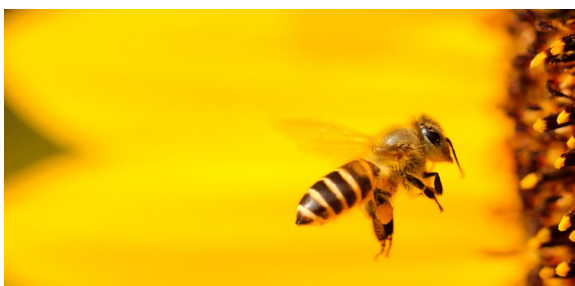
well; it is a place for respite, a magic space to escape to and a place to look to for inspiration and ideas. A functioning, balanced ecosystem also acts as a barrier to infectious diseases and protects us against zoonotic pandemics. This diversity reduces disease risk and is called the **dilution effect**.

Nature is our home, guardian, and teacher. Yet we treat it so badly. Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in millions of years. **The 2020 Living Planet Report** highlights that globally there has been an average **68%** decrease in population sizes of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish between 1970 and 2016. In the tropical subregions of the Americas there has been a **94% decline**<sup>18</sup>.





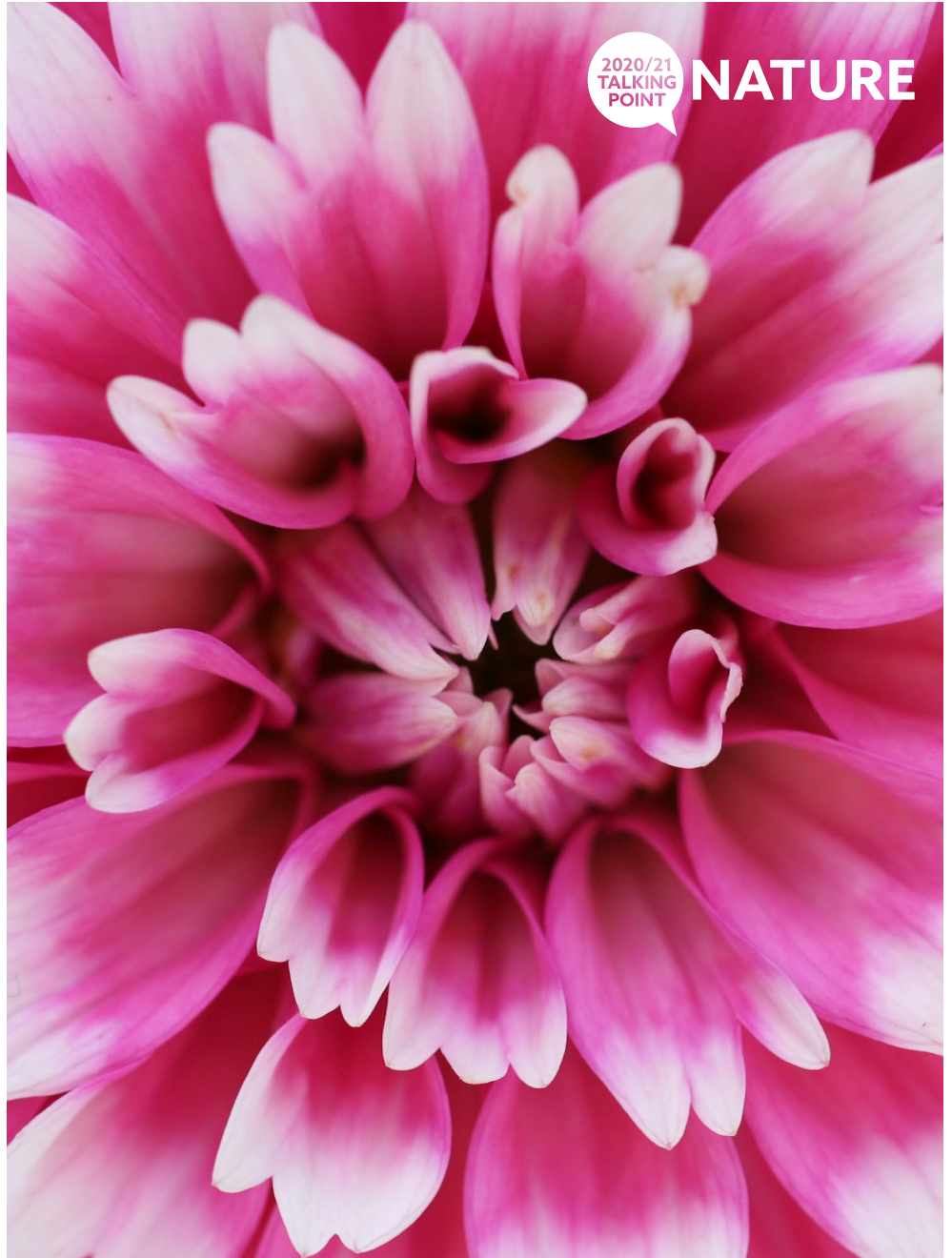
## THE POWER AND ROLE **OF THE GLOBAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS INDUSTRY**



→ **As succinctly described** in the Joint Meetings and Industry **Council Manifesto**<sup>19</sup>, our sector plays a key role in facilitating and supporting essential exchanges in the areas of professional, corporate, academic and social development. These are integral to not only economic advancement but societal development as a whole. Our sector is therefore a strategic tool in not only delivering recovery, but in transitioning to a new resilient, inclusive and zero carbon growth model that values and restores nature and its communities.









**"A REGENERATIVE EVENTS** economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, designing in inclusiveness and diversity, and regenerating natural systems. It is inspired by nature, restorative and regenerative by design."

Guy Bigwood, **GDS - Movement.** →

## SECTION TWO

# INTRODUCTION TO THE REGENERATIVE ECONOMY



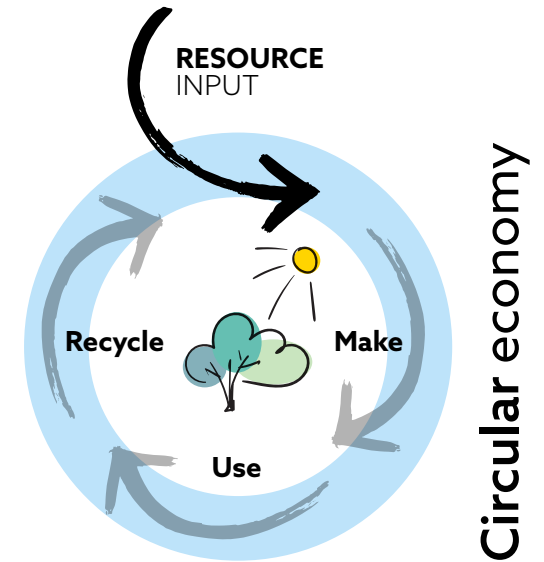


# FROM LINEAR TO CIRCULAR

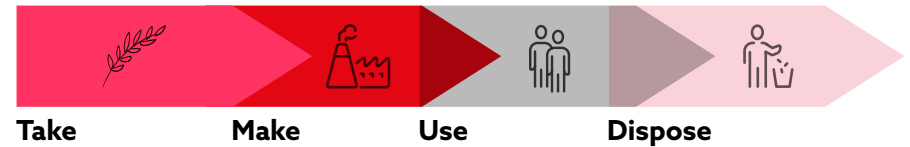
SECTION TWO



Out of almost **100 gigatons** of extracted resources, only **8.6%** are cycled into the economy. We need to shift to a **Circular Economy**



## Linear economy



**THE EVENTS SECTOR** generates an immeasurable volume of waste, that goes far beyond the bottles, cups, and straws that are used. It includes carpets, pop ups, banners, fabrics, flooring, graphics, furniture, displays, merchandising giveaways, stands, booths, food, clothing and a long etc.

The industry excels at creating immersive and temporary settings that are physically dressed and decorated to bring the organisations and sponsors' brands to life. These exhibition booths, brand experiences and conferences are generally decorated with virgin, single-use,

non-recyclable, toxic plastics, which are either incinerated or sent to landfill at the end of the event.

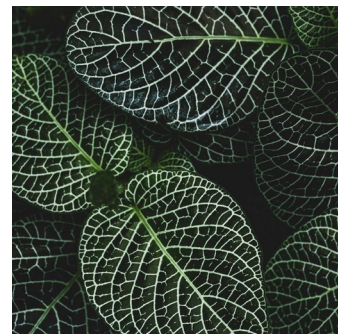
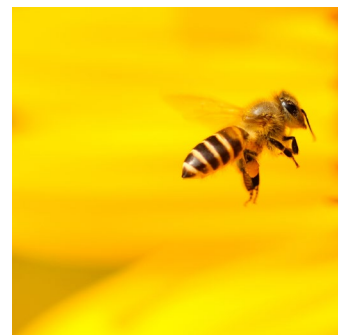
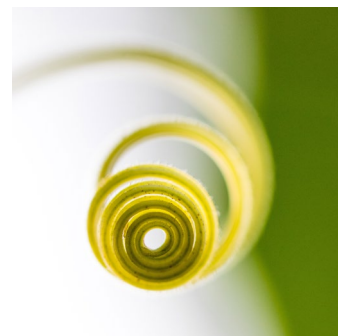
Our collective past perfected a **linear economic model of event management that focuses on: take, make, use, and dispose**. This needs to change into a circular and regenerative model, where the goods of today become the resources of tomorrow. The extraction of raw materials and the production of waste can be drastically reduced by recovering, repairing, remaking, reusing, and recycling as many products and materials as possible, repeatedly and in a systematic way.



## We have an economic opportunity:

All around the world brands, institutions, cities, and countries are rethinking economic development models to improve people's lives, include disadvantaged communities and be more circular. Cambridge Economics estimates that applying circular economy

principles across the EU economy has the potential to create around **700,000** new jobs and create a net benefit of **€1.8 billion** by 2030<sup>20</sup>. Accenture calculated that the circular economy is the world's largest opportunity, with the potential to unlock **\$4.5 trillion growth**<sup>21</sup>.



The transition to a circular economy is already happening around the world:



More than **1,000** organisations have united behind the **New Plastics Economy Initiative**<sup>22</sup> that sets a common vision and targets for a circular economy for plastic. Global brands such as Google, Danone, BMW, Renault, Nike, Philips, and Unilever have advanced plans, and entire industries such as fashion and mobility are signing collective agreements to transform their business models.



## THE EMERGENCE OF GREEN SWANS



**JOHN ELKINGTON, THE** grandfather of sustainability, believes we are entering a new age of miracles, which will see the emergence of **"Green Swans"**<sup>23</sup>. These are profound market shifts, generally catalysed by a combination of **Black Swan** challenges and changing paradigms, values, mindsets, politics, policies, technologies and business models.

A **Green Swan** delivers exponential positive progress in the form of economic, social, and environmental wealth creation. Examples include the rapid electrification of our mobility and transportation systems, the exponential evolution of machine learning and AI, the growing appetite for plant-based diets, the boom in online meeting technologies and the European Union's one trillion Euro Green Deal.

## SECTION TWO



## LEGISLATION IS NEXT:

### GOVERNMENTS AROUND

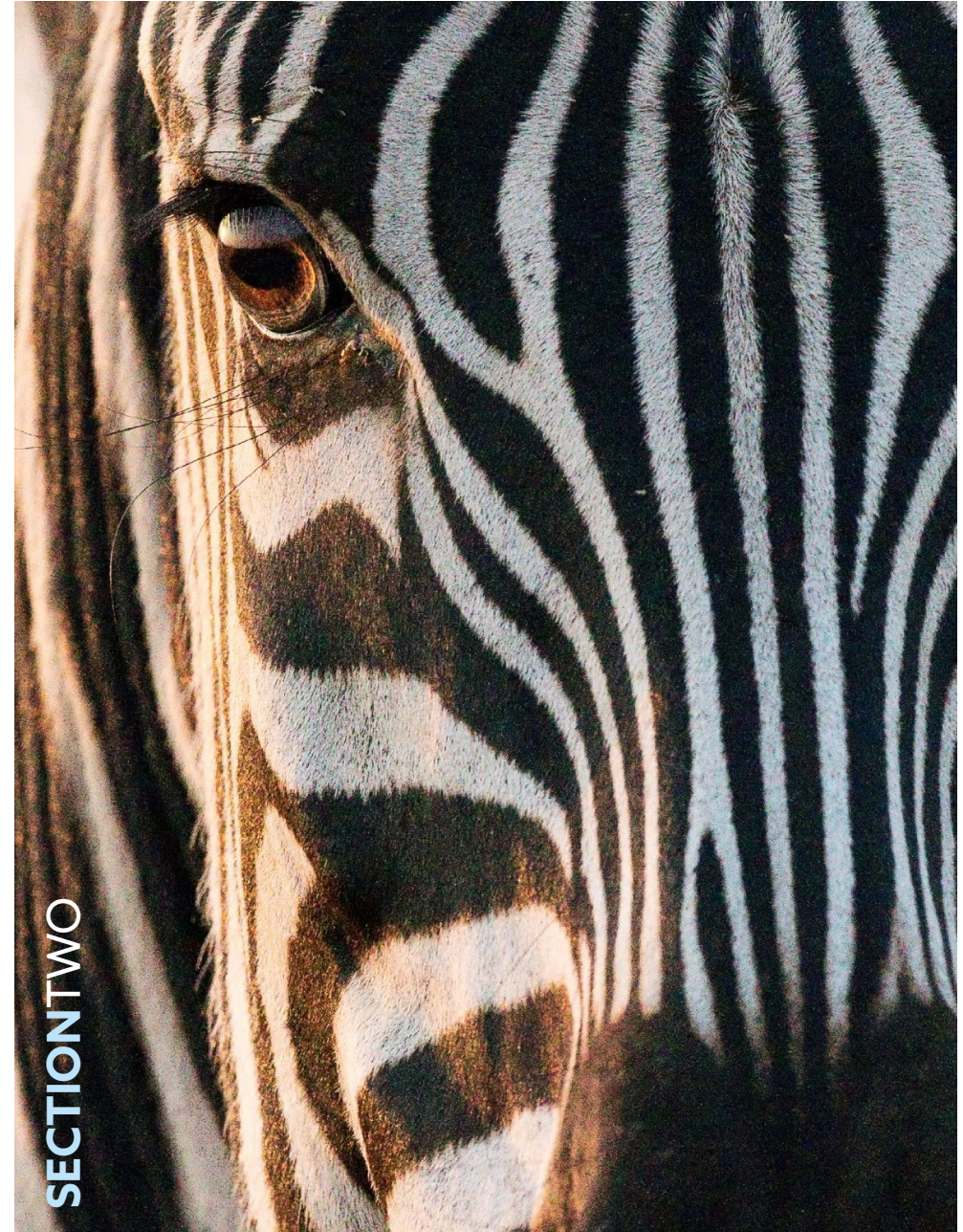
**THE** world are working on an international policy to accelerate the development of the circular economy and to ban single-use plastic. The European Commission has taken a further step and made the Circular Economy a key part of the European Green Deal and COVID-19 recovery plan. The EU has already approved and is implementing a European **wide ban** on selected single-use plastic by 2021, with 2025 targets for the improved design of plastic products, higher plastic waste recycling rates, and a new EU Plastic Tax.

Currently, 27 European nations are converting this Plastics Directive into national legislation, with the ban already active in many countries such as France and Switzerland. Canada, China and over 34 African countries are introducing, or already impose some restriction on single-use plastics.



**"Nature is not** to be conquered or opposed, but she is to be regarded as a model of applied principles: Nature always does things in the most efficient and economic way. We need to learn how nature makes design decisions" →  
**R. Buckminster Fuller.**

# LEARNING FROM NATURE



SECTION TWO





**AFTER 3.6 BILLION** years of research and development nature is the most advanced living, evolving and innovating laboratory of knowledge and circular solutions that regenerate and function in ultimate balance – nothing is wasted.

The human characteristics of greed, poverty and pollution are entirely absent in nature. All elements work together to exist, sharing water, air and open spaces. If they do this successfully, species thrive. If they don't, they perish. As a result, healthy species consistently learn, innovate, adapt, and **regenerate**<sup>24</sup>. There is an equilibrium between efficiency and resilience, collaboration and competition, diversity and coherence. Each aspect of the system creates value for the broader ecosystem which enables it to flourish as a whole.

By building upon this understanding of nature, we propose that for the greater success of our future, we need to imagine and comprehend the events industry as a living ecosystem. By understanding the structure, systems, and processes of our living system, we can redesign it to recover and thrive post pandemic. →

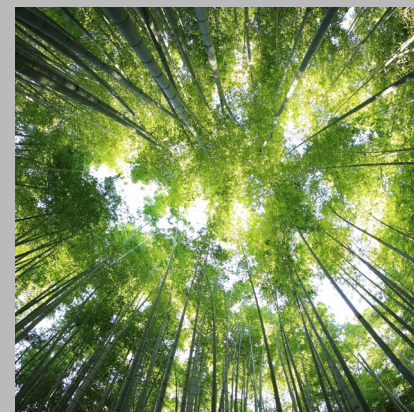






**Consider the life** cycle of a tree and how much it gives as a result of its existence. Whilst the tree lives it absorbs carbon dioxide and outputs oxygen providing vital atmospheric balance. Its roots nourish the soil and keep it intact, and when it dies it decomposes back into the soil and provides countless microbial benefits to nourish the next new growth."

SECTION TWO

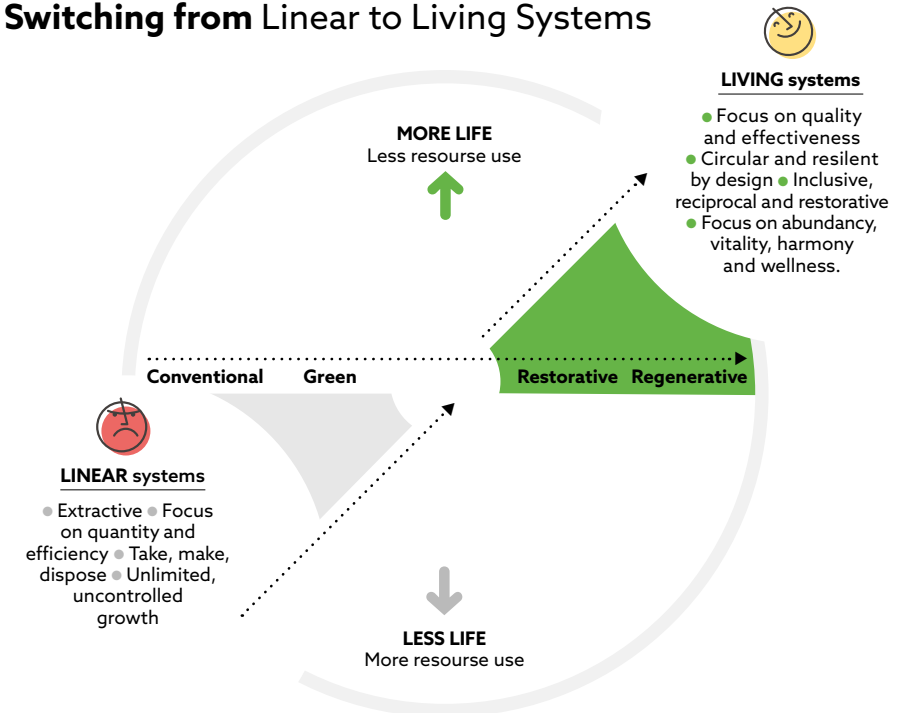




# FROM SUSTAINABILITY TO REGENERATION?

## The thinking

### Switching from Linear to Living Systems



For the last 15 years, the events industry has been on a slow path towards making events more sustainable. Our focus on sustainability has been about "surviving" instead of thriving but this has not, nor will it deliver the change we need to see in the industry.

To achieve a successful future, we need to shift the paradigm of business and public thinking, beliefs and values and embrace what regenerative models can offer all of us. Sustainability implies a self-sustaining state and is often defined by humanity's ability to meet its own needs without compromising the

needs of future generations. Therefore, the focus is on doing less harm. For example, a degraded landscape may therefore be sustained in its current state and be used to produce food for humans, but won't be improved and brought back to its former biologically **diverse state**<sup>25</sup>.

Meanwhile the term 'regeneration' refers to designing systems and practices that take a holistic systems approach to solving environmental, social and economic problems; aiming to restore and rejuvenate them rather than merely sustain conditions. →



## REGENERATIVE DESIGN



### REGENERATIVE DESIGN

**OBSERVES** nature in order to inspire living systems thinking. It focuses on abundance, vitality, harmony and wellness. It aims for humans to work in partnership with each other and nature rather than in competition against it. Humans are viewed as part of the broader natural ecosystem rather than the dominator and there is no separation between “us” and “it”. **We are nature!**

“**Regenerative development** asks us to imagine cities, towns, and villages that possess greater natural beauty, ecological health, and productive capacity than even the world’s most pristine forests”

Bill Reed, Regenesiis

## SECTION TWO

## REGENERATIVE SYSTEMS

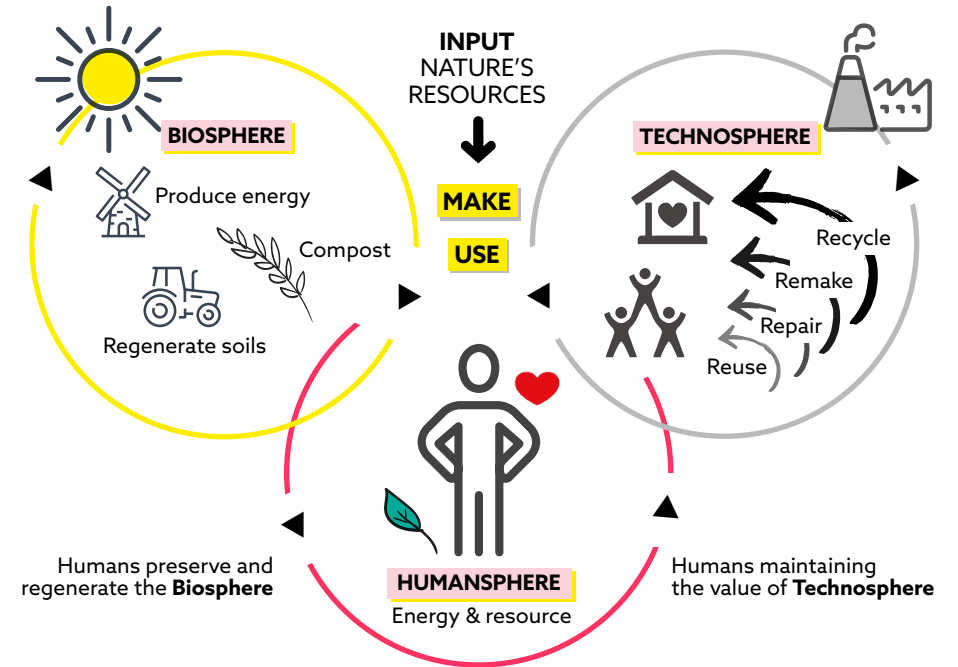
### REGENERATIVE SYSTEMS

**HAVE** a focus on quality and effectiveness. They are circular by design aiming for energy, natural resources and materials to be conserved, enriched, reused, recycled and used to enhance equitable development. The system enables an increase in resilience by increasing diversity and equality. For example, a tradeshow stand made from 70% recycled materials is often considered to be “sustainable”. By contrast, a regenerative tradeshow stand would be made from 100% recycled materials and be 100% recyclable. Its production, usage and disposal would improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of its organisation and host communities.





## SECTION TWO



INSPIRED BY WORK FROM  
ALEXANDRE LEMILLE

### THE OPERATING model of a circular and regenerative economy



**IN A REGENERATIVE**  
and circular economic  
model, waste would not  
exist and material goods  
would be separated into  
two loops (technosphere  
and biosphere), united  
by a third loop called  
the **humansphere**<sup>26</sup>.

In the technical cycle  
or technosphere, metals,  
minerals, and polymers  
are used for as long as  
possible until their original  
components can be  
reused, repaired, remade,  
or recycled. This process  
keeps resources in a closed  
loop and ensures optimal  
use of new resources and  
materials.

In the biological loop  
or biosphere, food, and  
biologically based materials  
such as fibres, paper, or  
wood, are designed to be  
composted or anaerobically

digested. This process  
regenerates living systems  
by converting them to  
soil or renewable energy.

In the human loop or  
humansphere, people are  
a unique part of nature  
that is versatile, adaptable,  
creative and can be  
constantly developed.  
We are an abundant source  
of energy and resources.

Our role is to preserve and  
regenerate the biosphere,  
and maintain the value of  
the technosphere and all  
its technical resources and  
technological innovation.



**In a circular** and regenerative economy, economic activity builds and rebuilds overall system health. It is restorative and regenerative by design. The concept recognises the importance of the economy needing to work effectively at all scales – for big and small businesses, for organisations and individuals, globally and locally. →



# KEY PRINCIPLES

SECTION TWO



Key Principle 01

**Design out waste and pollution**



The event sector's key impacts include food and tradeshow waste, water pollution (from cleaning materials), greenhouse gases from transportation and energy consumption, and structural 'waste' such as traffic congestion.

In a circular model, most of these environmental wastes can be identified in the planning phase and designed out of the final event, with the purpose of removing the negative impacts that cause damage to human health and natural systems.

For example, instead of building an exhibition stand from single-use PVC plastic and wood, the stand could be redesigned to be made using a modular system that uses recycled materials and non-toxic adhesives.

# KEY PRINCIPLES

We build on the work of the **Ellen MacArthur Foundation** to define four principles for circularity and regenerative design:

## SECTION TWO

Key Principle 02

**Keep products and materials in use**



A circular model favours activity that conserves value in the form of energy, labour, and materials.

This means designing for durability, reuse, repair, remanufacturing, and recycling to keep products, components, and materials circulating in the economy.

Circular systems make effective use of bio-based materials by encouraging many different uses for them as they cycle between the economy and natural systems. In an event context, by removing the event's name and date from badges, lanyards, booths, and signage this collateral could be collected, cleaned, and reused multiple times. →



## Key Principle 03

### Design for inclusiveness and diversity

**Nature (and research)** supports that ecosystems that embrace diversity, equality and inclusion perform better. With this in mind it is important we acknowledge and move away from the linear use of human beings as capital.

To be inclusive an event needs to be accessible and diverse. Event organisers need to design in better physical accessibility, financial accessibility, and cognitive accessibility for participants, and then increase the diversity of participants, speakers and sponsors.

This can be as simple as ensuring that the speakers at your event represent a varied set of opinions and views (please no more all male white panels); or ensuring you have a mix of race, gender and sexual orientation on your industry boards, communities and executive teams; or making your **LGBTQ+** attendees feel welcome. Further on it demands that your business models pay everyone fairly, regardless of their gender, race, or sexual orientation. It also requires a mindset where organisers consider how they can use their events and people to catalyse social impact and improve local communities.

## SECTION TWO



## Key Principle 04

### Regenerate natural systems

"In an ecosystemic approach pollution, greed, unemployment, waste, inequalities and poverty - among others - are human inventions. Thus, they can and should be designed out of our next model of life."

Alexandre Lemille



In a **regenerative** system the use of non-renewable resources is removed in favour of enabling energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. Biological waste such as left-over food is converted into energy or compost thereby returning valuable nutrients to the soil to support its health and productivity.

When it comes to addressing carbon emissions, a regenerative approach would aim to minimise travel, promote local supply chains and food networks. All unavoidable emissions would be offset through projects that aim to heal ecosystems and communities.





**BY INTEGRATING THE FOUR** core principles into the business models, design and operations of events. We will enable a disruption of the old linear systems thinking and accelerate a shift to more purposeful, inclusive and regenerative practices based on Living Systems Design.

Instead of seeing the hosting and supplier community as supplying resources and assets in the organisation of the event, consider how the event itself provides **"ecosystem services"** back to the community and thereby offers enhanced value. →





**"Proper strategies to design more purposeful and inclusive events can generate a plethora of social value for participants and communities. If the intention of doing good by design is combined with systematic legacy planning, strong stakeholder engagement and an impact measurement and reporting mindset, the capital-building potential of these events is limitless."**

**Geneviève Leclerc, CEO, #Meet4Impact**



### **BY RETHINKING AND**

redesigning how events create impact for stake holders, events can generate:

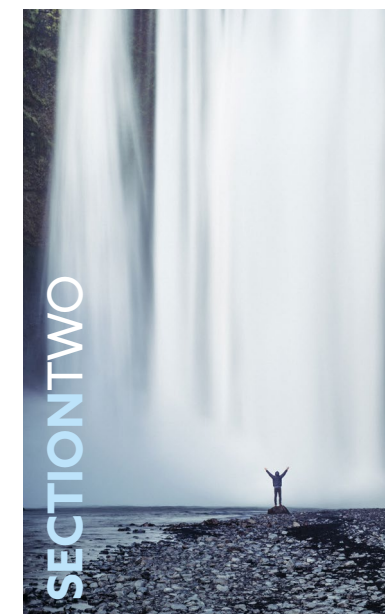
→ **Natural Capital:** by protecting, restoring, and regenerating ecosystems and services.

→ **Human Capital:** by creating jobs, satisfying employees, improving people's health, creating new knowledge, skills and motivation.

→ **Social Capital:** by stimulating innovation, collaboration and the development of thriving and inclusive communities, businesses, trade unions, schools and voluntary organisations.

### → **Financial Capital:**

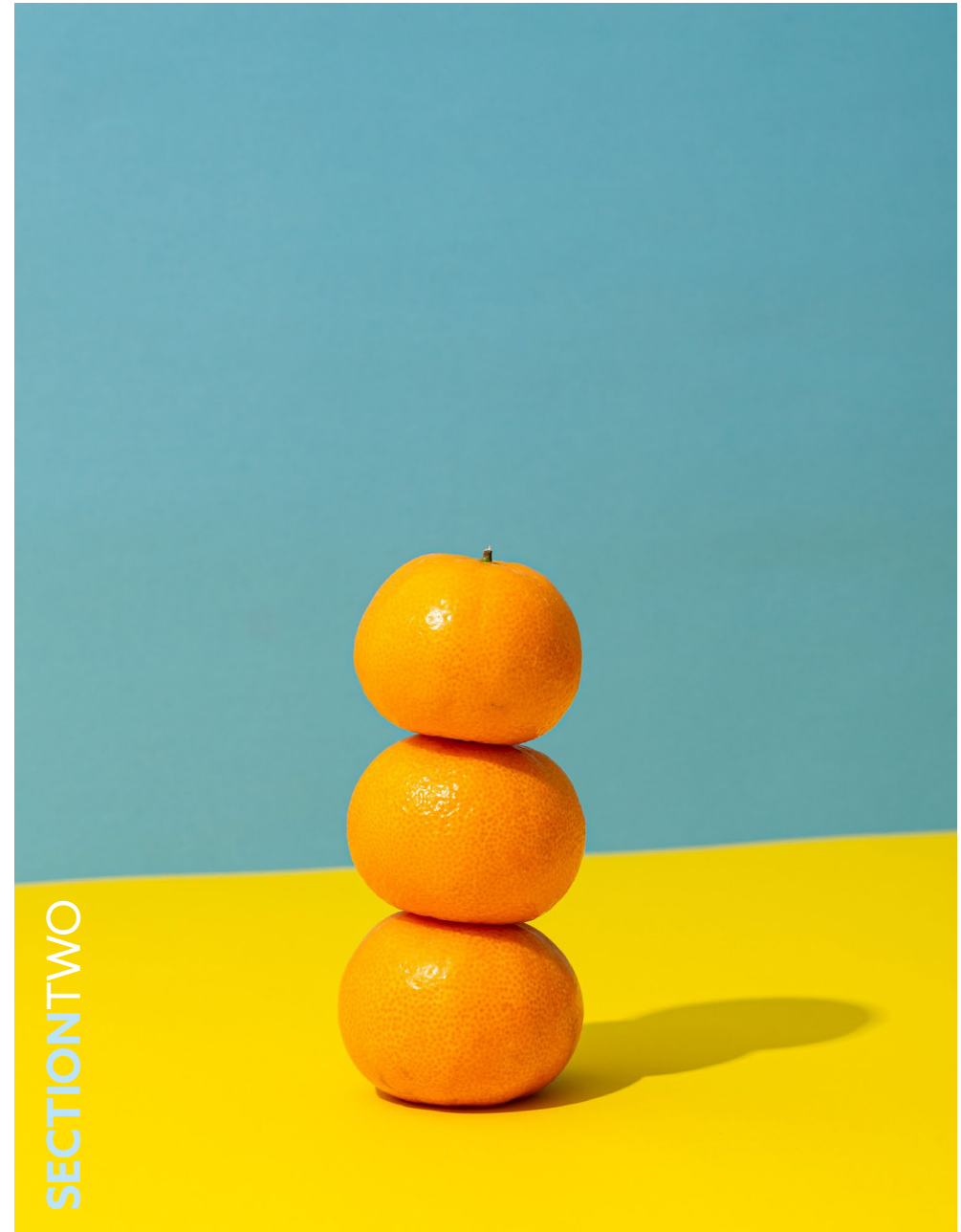
by generating incomes, creating shareholder value, strengthening competitiveness, and building business resilience.





**Feel the Peel.** The circular economy model can catalyse creativity and innovation. To provide a glimpse of what the future could look like, CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati in partnership with global energy company **Eni** created a pilot project for an experimental circular juice bar. This innovation uses leftover orange peels to make bioplastic, turns it into filament and then 3D prints disposable cups to drink the freshly-squeezed juice out of. →

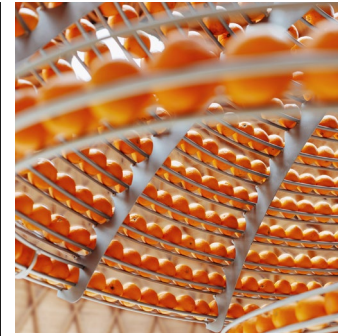
# CASE STUDY





The “Feel the Peel” prototype is a 3,10-meter high orange squeezer machine, topped by a dome filled with 1,500 oranges. When a person orders a juice, oranges slide down into the squeezer, while its peels are accumulated

and transformed into bioplastic through a process of drying and milling. Once heated and melted, the polymer becomes a filament, used by a 3D printer incorporated into the machine.

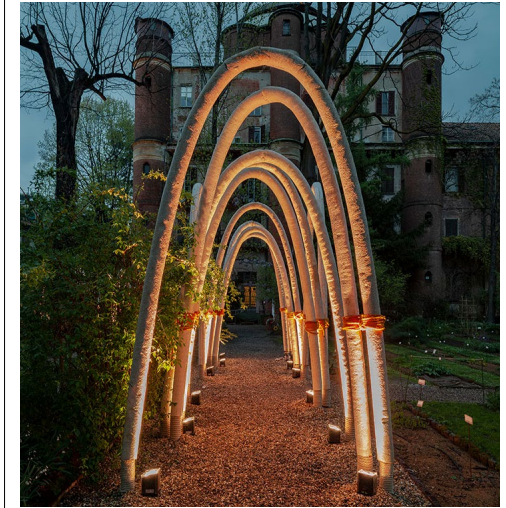


CASE STUDY DESIGNED BY ENI

1500

The “Feel the Peel” prototype is a 3,10-meter high orange squeezer machine, topped by a dome filled with 1,500 oranges.

In what other ways, could we convert waste from an event “on the spot”, into a product that we could use?



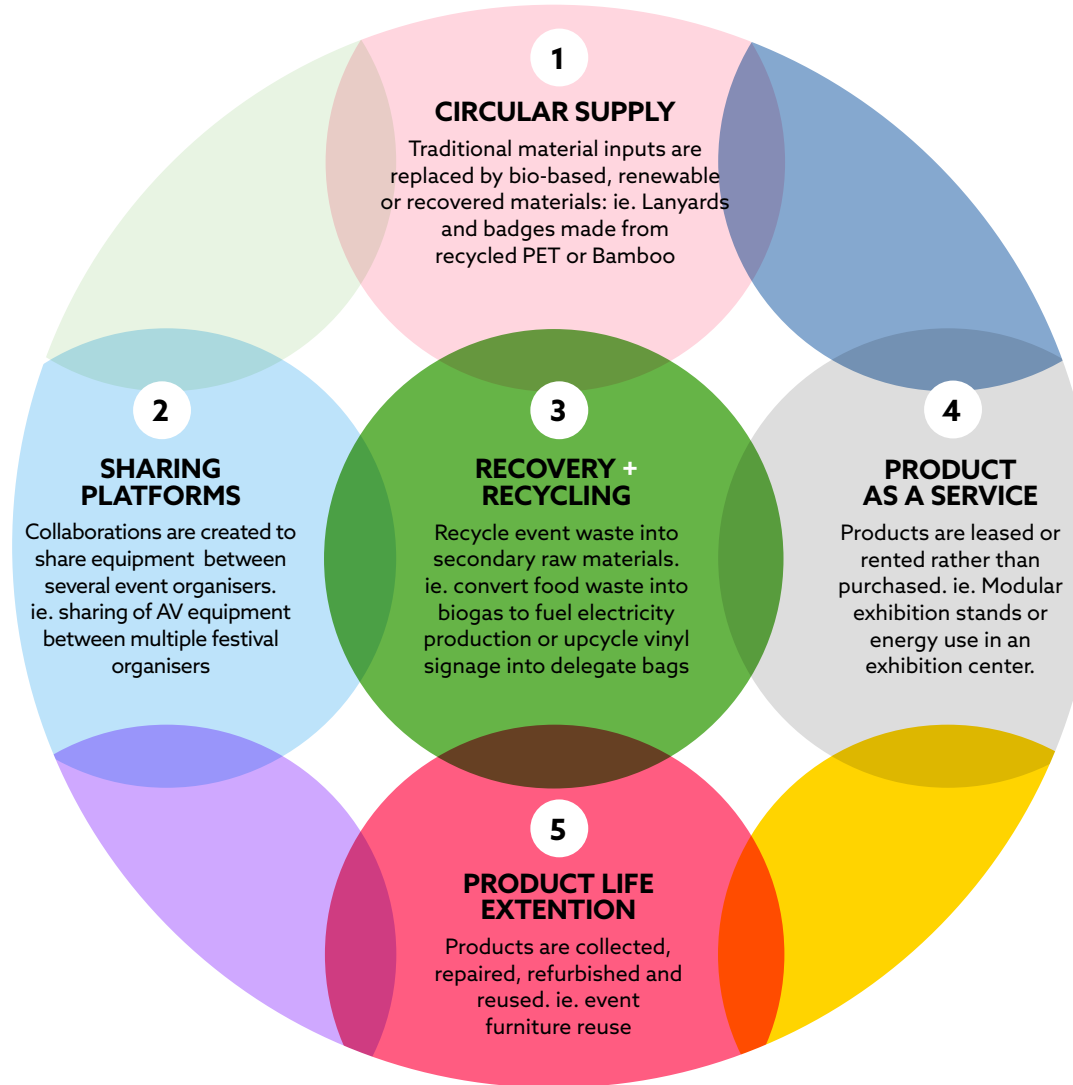
Among the previous projects, the prize-winning **Circular Garden** at Milan Design Week 2019 used **mycelium** from mushrooms as a recyclable building material. The circular restaurant at the 2018 Maker Faire in Rome explored how Solid Urban Waste (FORSU) from food processing such as frying oil was used to produce a second-generation biofuel and how polystyrene could be recycled for use in the heat insulation sector.





## CIRCULAR business models

**HERE ARE FIVE** common circular business models that the events sector can leverage - singly or in combination - to improve resource productivity in innovative ways that can also help to cut costs, generate new revenues, enhance customer value, and advance social progress.



**To build a** circular and regenerative economic model requires innovative business strategies that shift the focus from ownership to performance, from consumption to usage, and work with, not against nature.

Adapted from the OECD  
**Business Models for the Circular Economy**<sup>27</sup>

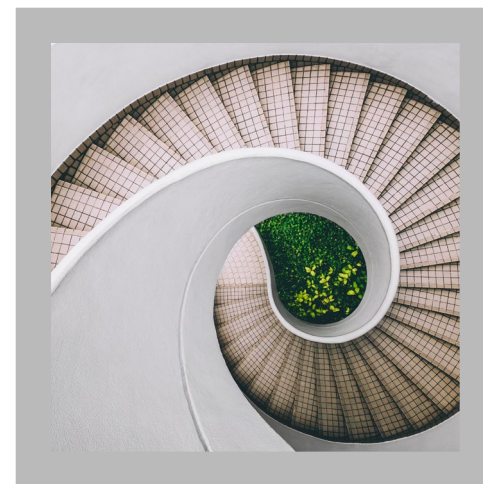


“

A new mindset for business is emerging. It's worth around a trillion dollars, will drive innovation in tomorrow's companies, and reshape every part of our lives.”

THE CIRCULAR DESIGN GUIDE

SECTION TWO





## LOOP - The zero-waste retail platform.

Reusing an object saves time, energy, and resources and does away with the need for waste disposal or recycling. Consider the amount of water and soft drink bottles that are used in an event, or the quantity of plastic bottles that are used to store cleaning chemicals in a hotel, venue, or restaurant. Is there a better way to offer these products and services via a closed loop system? →

# CASE STUDY



SECTION TWO



## HOW IT WORKS



Loop is a  
reboot of the  
milkman"

TOM SZAKY,  
CEO OF TERRACYCLE

SECTION TWO

**LOOP IS A** new global service designed to enable household collection of empty or used product packaging for refilling, reuse, or recycling. Loop offers popular products such as Häagen-Dazs ice cream, Tropicana orange juice, Tide Washing Liquid and Quaker Oats oatmeal, — in durable glass and aluminum tubs designed to be returned, cleaned, and refilled. **Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and Danone** are just some of the 50 brands that are partners in the initiative. Loop has now extended to include several retail partners, including Walgreens in the United States, Tesco in the United Kingdom, and Carrefour in France.

20%

By the **tenth** use cycle, Loop claims nearly **20%** lower environmental impacts than regular retail consumption

35%

less than regular e-commerce.



**Loop life-cycle** analysis data shows that their system breaks-even with traditional supply chains in as few as three uses of their durable packaging. By the tenth use cycle, Loop claims nearly **20%** lower environmental impacts than regular retail consumption, and **35%** less than regular **e-commerce**<sup>28</sup>.



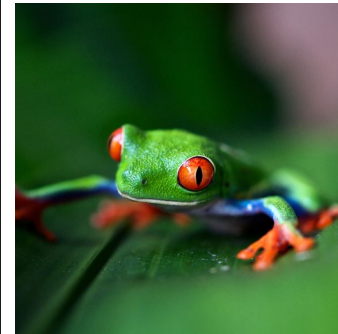
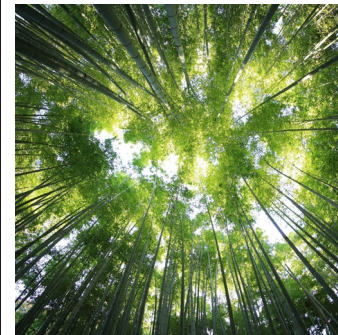
## The big question:

**HOW COULD WE**  
adapt the Loop model  
to work for hotels and  
venues in a city?



### THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR WORK:

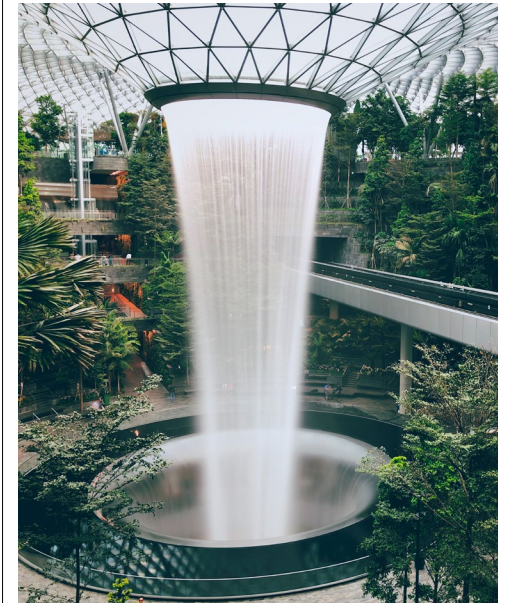
**WE BASE OUR**  
understandings of the  
Circular Economy on  
the work of the **Ellen  
MacArthur Foundation**  
alongside insights from  
**Alexandre Lemille** and his  
recent paper “**Making the  
Circular Economy work  
for Human Development**”.  
We also draw upon  
inspiration and insights  
from the realms of  
nature-inspired innovation  
(biomimicry), the work on  
**Regenerative Leadership**  
by **Giles Hutchins** and  
**Laura Storm**, and the  
8 Principles for a  
Regenerative Economy  
from the Capital Institute.



“**Biomimicry is about** valuing  
nature for what we can learn,  
not what we can extract,  
harvest, or domesticate. In  
the process, we learn about  
ourselves, our purpose, and  
our connection to each other  
and our home on earth”

**JANINE BENYUS**

## Nature inspired innovation:



**BIOMIMICRY<sup>29</sup>, PIONEERED  
by Janine Benyus**, is a practice  
that learns from and mimics  
the strategies used by species  
alive today.

Through her work, Janine  
invites us to **#AskNature** to  
find biological and regenerative  
strategies and inspired ideas  
that can accelerate the creation  
of new products, processes,  
and policies to solve our  
greatest design challenges in  
solidarity with all life on earth.





CONSIDER WHERE  
COULD WE USE MYCELIUM-  
BASED PRODUCTS IN  
THE EVENTS INDUSTRY:

- Packaging for Audio-visual equipment
- Protective packaging for stands and booths
- Food and beverage containers?

EPS INVESTIGATION

## CASE STUDY: MUSHROOM PACKAGING

### SECTION TWO

**Picture the amount** of expanded polystyrene (**EPS**) that is used in the events sector. It is used for transporting fish and vegetables, as cups, plates, in signage and to protect equipment. **EPS** commonly called Styrofoam takes at least 500 years to decompose. As it breaks down in nature it leaches the toxic substances styrene and benzene. Both are identified carcinogens and neurotoxins that are hazardous to humans and water systems. Styrofoam has become a significant portion of the 8 million metric tonnes of plastic that enter our oceans every year. If we **#AskNature**, for a solution to replace polystyrene, what would we find?

**Ecovative** is a US company that pioneered the science of growing better materials. They are using mycelium, the root structure of mushrooms, to grow an entirely new class of materials that replace plastics.

Their mushroom-based products are produced from the waste fibres of farming such as corn husk and hemp, that are seeded with mushroom tissue. In less than seven days, these spores grow into the **MycoComposite** that can then be moulded into any shape.

It is performance and price competitive compared with conventional foamed polymers and can be used for hundreds of applications from food packaging, textiles for fashion, cosmetic sponges, flower pots, and spa slippers.

At the end of its product lifecycle the materials can be completely composted at home or work.







**Imagine...it's 2030.** Linear thinking has been replaced with living systemic-thinking and regenerative economic systems. Our global events are powered by energy created by nature that is clean, plentiful, and almost free. The air is getting cleaner as vehicles switch to zero-emission engines and congestion reduces as shared transport increases. More people walk and cycle to events and work, boosting health and interactions with local businesses and communities. The food served is healthy, grown locally, and there are no harmful toxic chemicals in the supply chain. →



**PRESENTING**  
A REGENERATIVE  
EVENT MANAGEMENT  
FRAMEWORK

REGENERATIVE EVENT MANAGEMENT

# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

SECTION THREE







**Nature inspires innovation.** Waste has been eradicated and stands, brand experiences and signage are produced using circular techniques that design out pollution. Materials are reused, rented, shared, and at the end of their life cycle are composted or recycled. Disposable, single-use plastics are obsolete.

**The global events industry** has fully embraced the **17 UN Sustainable Development Goals** and uses them as the foundation framework for engaging stakeholders to advance social and economic progress and protect our environment.

**Events don't just take place in destinations** - they are now designed to contribute to building flourishing communities and to enhancing the quality of life of residents and participants.

**They are purposeful** in leveraging global and local knowledge in tackling complex problems, and are designed to protect and restore the planet, develop new knowledge and skills, create jobs, attract investment, accelerate innovation, and build relationships and trust. The experiences created are inclusive, accessible and share resources and economic benefits fairly. The whole system is alive and thriving due to the regenerative nature of our activities. →



## BIOMIMICRY IN ACTION:

**THE KINGFISHER'S BEAK** became the model for the nose cone of Japan's 500 Series Shinkansen bullet train.





**Our industry research** for this report, plus our exploration of living systems thinking made us realise that there is a need to develop frameworks and tools to support event suppliers, organisers and educators on their journey of transformation.

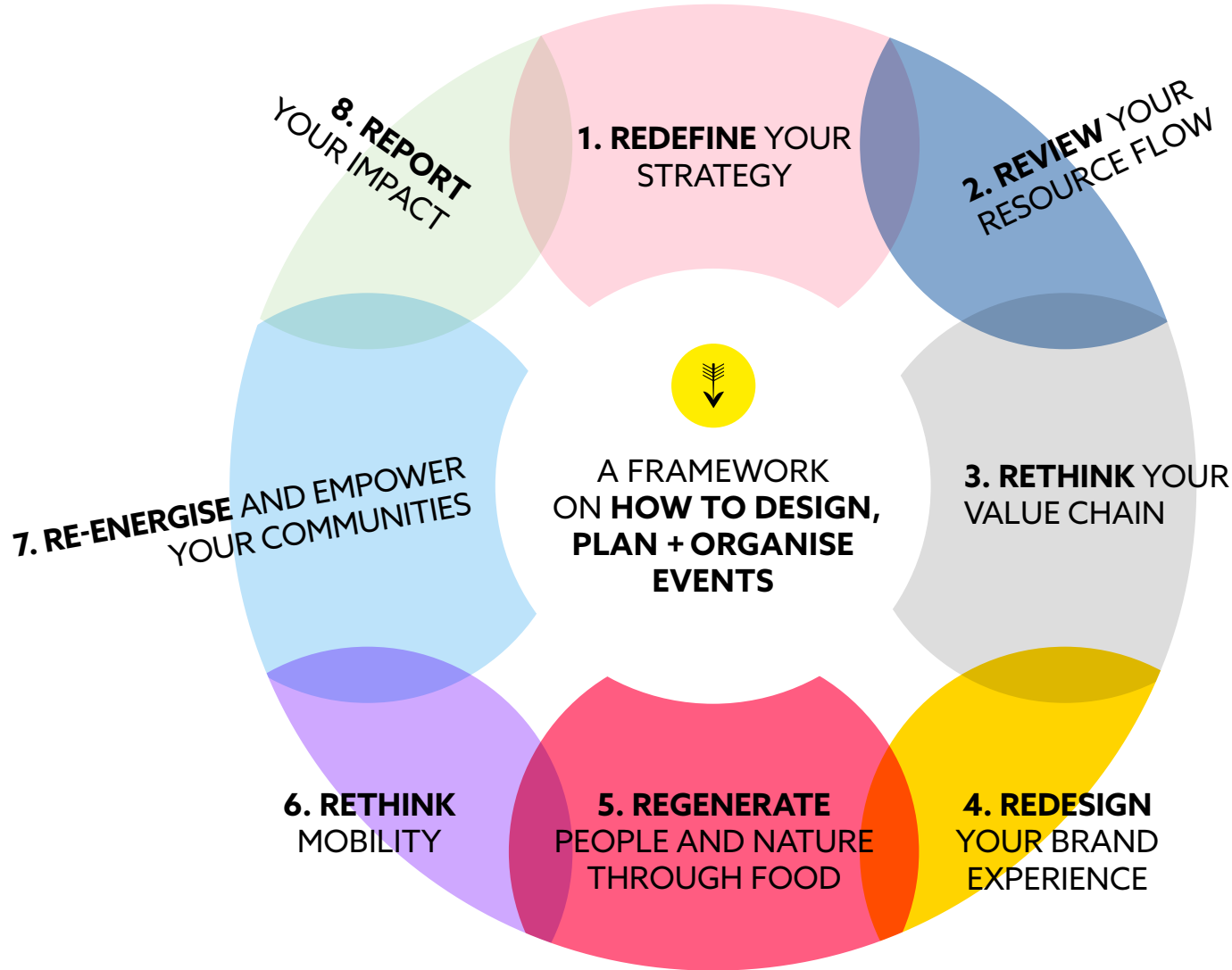
Our approach is encapsulated in the word **Hannuwa**, an ancient San word from South Africa that means the **gathering of good fortune through living in harmony with our natural environment**. In its first edition, **Hannuwa** comprises four key principles and an eight-step methodology which serves to educate and guide event organisers towards more regenerative event management. We recognise that the events sector is just one piece of the puzzle and we undertake to conduct research that includes destinations, hotels, venues, and other key stakeholders. Strong leadership is required in order to achieve this paradigm shift and it goes hand in hand with a personal shift in consciousness which we will also explore in future research. ➔

# HANNUWA

DESIGN, PLAN AND ORGANISE







#### A DEFINITION FOR REGENERATIVE EVENT MANAGEMENT:

**"An economic approach** wherein event planning, resourcing, procurement and production are designed and managed to optimise ecosystem functioning and human well-being. It is inspired by nature, restorative, and regenerative by intention and design." **#Natureworks**

**HANNUWA** ↑





# 1

REDEFINE YOUR STRATEGY

**REVIEW THE UN Sustainable Development Goals** and use the framework to help you identify challenges facing your community, and where your business and event(s) can make a positive social, environmental and economic impact. Stop focusing on doing less bad and start working to organise events that can regenerate.

Challenge your assumptions and beliefs to rethink and set ambitious goals for your event based on your new and inspiring vision of community impact, inclusion and regeneration. Build an event design team that includes a diverse group (i.e. age, gender, race, expertise) of stakeholders who are committed and dynamic people with a passion to create change. Co-create the event strategy, identifying and developing new business models and operational practices that generate social, human, financial and natural capital.

## SECTION THREE



# 2

REVIEW YOUR  
RESOURCE FLOW

**YOU CAN'T MANAGE** if you don't measure. Name and map all incoming flows of resources (i.e. people, energy, water, materials, money) and outgoing flows of resources (i.e. materials, emissions, knowledge). Analyse this resource flow map to identify challenges and then use it to set goals, drive strategy, and monitor results. You already do this with your financial balance sheet so, it is an add on to map, understand, and integrate other resources into your strategic planning. →





MATERIAL FLOW ANALYSIS

## CASE STUDY: DGTL MEASURING MATERIAL FLOWS

### SECTION THREE

**A SUPREME EXAMPLE** of taking the lead has been the turnaround of the global headline music festival **DGTL**. Confronting the unsustainable principles of the current festival model, they decided to reposition their electronic music festival as the world's most circular festival. To meet this goal, **DGTL** has fundamentally reimagined and redesigned their event to experiment with the latest technological breakthroughs to eliminate waste, reduce **CO2** emissions and increase environmental awareness. Their mission is to use their events as living-labs for future city innovations.

#### MATERIAL FLOW ANALYSIS

The most important component of their **sustainability strategy** is the baseline measurement or analysis that they have introduced to understand the resource flows that enter and exit the festival, and the different kinds of impacts these flows have.

This Material Flow Analysis (MFA) quantifies the overall environmental impact through analysis of materials, waste, energy, water, artist, and visitor travel. Using this data, **DGTL** has been able to answer some key questions about where the festival should focus in order to achieve a circular state, and continue its exemplary efforts in bringing a working model of best practice to the forefront of the festival's industry.



# 3

RETHINK YOUR  
VALUE CHAIN

## CIRCULARITY REQUIRES A

rethink of how you work with your contractors, suppliers, partners, and sponsors. Reorganise your value chain by partnering with responsible organisations that align and commit to your vision and goals. Integrate more certified and social enterprises and source products that are local, inclusive and ethical. If possible, choose a destination that has a strong municipal circularity strategy.

The **Global Destination Sustainability Index** can help you find them. Unite your key suppliers, sponsors, and partners into a "regeneration team" to think big and collaborate to reimagine and experiment with how your event(s) can achieve business targets while making a measurable difference to host communities and nature.

## SECTION THREE

"We do our part to leave the world a better place than we found it. We are committed not only to implementing best practice in event sustainability ourselves but also to using our influence to encourage everyone in our industry to maximise their efforts."

CARINA BAUER, CEO, IMEX Group

### Case Study:

## IMEX GROUP - rethinking how to partner for success

**IMEX's journey to sustainability** started in 2003. Since then in small steps IMEX have made significant progress on their circularity approach. Their supply chain strategy is based on engaging, collaborating and educating their partners. Exhibitors are encouraged to sign up to the IMEX sustainability pledge, and commit to a minimum of three actions.

Working closely with their venues, service contractors and partners such as MeetGreen, the team make consistent improvements each year. A focus on waste diversion has resulted in **472,356 kg** of show material recycled since 2012 at IMEX America. **80%** of mixed waste in Frankfurt is recycled, and **94%** in Las Vegas. Resources are donated to schools and NGOs through close connections with the Las Vegas and Frankfurt communities.

The polypropylene carpets, bamboo lanyards and paper/polyolith badges are recyclable, and easy-to-spot recycling bins are placed throughout the shows. Signage is vinyl-free, reusable, and recyclable paperboard. Any printed items use FSC-certified paper, vegetable and soy-based inks - and are completely recyclable. Venues are powered by hydroelectricity or renewable energy.



The IMEX "Sustainable  
Exhibiting Guide"<sup>#30</sup>



# 4

REDESIGN YOUR  
BRAND EXPERIENCE

**EVENTS USE CONSIDERABLE** amounts of materials to decorate and dress their spaces to create immersive but temporary environments. Start early in the event planning cycle to work proactively with designers and suppliers to design out waste and pollution from your brand experience. Use more regenerative bio-based materials, reduce the number of different plastics and design for simpler construction and deconstruction to facilitate reuse and recycling. Eliminate unnecessary and ineffective merchandising, print, signage and branding. Focus on renting and sharing infrastructure. Lastly collaborate with your supply chain to convert your waste into a resource, and innovate your brand experience by creating new products and services from these resources.







CREATING CIRCULAR  
BRAND EXPERIENCES

## SECTION THREE

### CASE STUDY: ECO BOOTH

**Ecobooth have transformed** over 70 tons of plastic waste into meaningful experiences for environmentally conscious brands. They re-design and re-engineer reclaimed, problem plastic into customer and visitor experiences at events, exhibitions, pop-ups, festivals and more. Projects include creating a pop-up shop made from recycled Absolut Vodka bottles, producing a furniture range made from plastic reclaimed on UK beaches by Surfers Against Sewage and recycling Selfridges' old acrylic displays into new items for their window exhibits.

Ecobooth launched in September 2018 with the 'Circular Booth', the world's first exhibition booth made entirely from re-purposed plastic waste for its client, PA Consulting. It was created using recycled drinks bottles, retired street cones and yoghurt pots. The stand was used at multiple events around the world in 2019 before being re-engineered into a new stand for 2020. In 2021 the same process will happen again, each time creating zero waste and using zero virgin materials.

Recent innovations include designing stands featuring 3D printed lampshades using recycled PET filament, 3D printed hanging-pots made from recycled high-impact polystyrene (found in old fridges), fabric cushions produced using recycled PET fabric and carpet tiles created from recycled fishing nets.

As a B Corporation, Ecobooth are committed to balancing purpose with profit, and the company's **400%** growth in its first two years is a shining example of a successful circular economy start up amongst a mostly linear industry.

For more detailed insights we recommend the **Waste-free festivals toolkit**, and the **Sustainable Look and Overlay**; an excellent report by **Meegan Jones** from the **Ocean Race** that explores the use of plastics and materials in large events. It has lots of great ideas, supplier recommendations and experiences.





# 5

REGENERATE  
PEOPLE AND NATURE  
THROUGH FOOD

## SOURCE LOCAL, ORGANIC

and healthy food that supports regenerative farming and promotes plant-based diets for your event. Change processes and maximise the use of technology to create a better buffet and food experience that tells the destination's culinary story, eliminates single-use items, promotes the use of reusable service ware, saves water, donates any unused and safe food and materials, and converts leftover food waste to compost or biogas.



SECTION THREE



## DGTL – Regenerating people and nature through food

**Food has an enormous** impact on the environment with reports stating that 25% of global greenhouse gas emissions are emitted by the food and agriculture sector – even more alarmingly, of all this food produced a third is thrown away annually. To tackle this issue in their festivals, **DGTL** decided to reinvent the food experience.

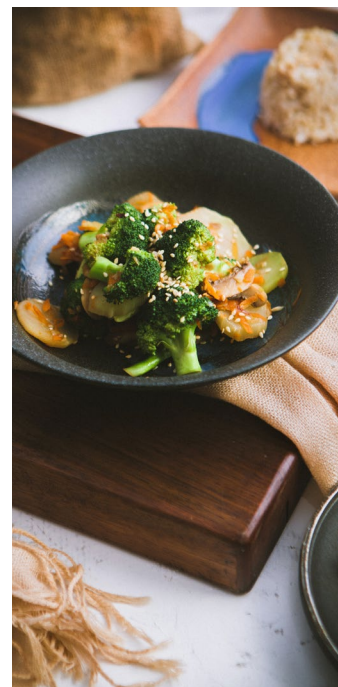
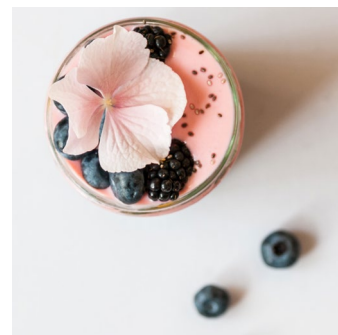
As a first step **DGTL** in 2018 removed meat from the menu, thereby drastically reducing CO2-emissions and saving large amounts of fresh-water and land. In its place local caterers served delicious

vegetarian and vegan meals to festival visitors. After finishing their meals, the visitors took their biodegradable plates and food leftovers to the resource collection point.

At the resource collection point, a composting machine converted disposables and leftovers into compost within 24 hours. The compost was then distributed amongst participating urban farmers. The urban farmers used the compost to grow vegetables for the next event. In doing so, **DGTL** closed the organic material flow and created zero food-waste. **More info**



SECTION THREE



LEANPATH SUCCESS STORY

64%

At **Marriott's Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa** in Edinburgh, the Leanpath implementation has resulted in a **64%** reduction in food waste by value.

## Marriott International using technology to reduce food waste



**Marriott's sustainability and social impact** strategy defines ambitious goals to reduce waste-to-landfill by **45%** from 2016 to 2025, with a 2025 goal to reduce food waste to landfill by **50%**. Their circular economy strategy is designed to assist its hotels in designing out, reducing and recycling waste in the most environmentally sound and cost-effective manner.

Technology and data play a big part in their innovation strategies. To reduce the amount of waste-to-landfill, **Marriott** is partnering with **Leanpath** at various properties to implement automated food waste tracking technology and food waste prevention solutions. The Leanpath technology features a food waste tracking terminal that includes a built-in scale, camera and touch screen user interface.

The **Marriott** kitchen teams take photos of the buffet and food waste. This data is automatically uploaded to a powerful, cloud-based analytics platform that provides clear and actionable insights on how to prevent waste and cut costs. These photos and data then let the chef know why the food was wasted; **i.e.** are the portions too big or was the dish overcooked and unappetising? From here the Chef can set a goal to reduce waste, train the team, change production processes and track progress. At **Marriott's Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa** in Edinburgh, the Leanpath implementation has resulted in a **64%** reduction in food waste by value, and a **58%** reduction by weight. **Read more**<sup>31</sup>



Focus on getting people walking at your event, using bikes, public transport and other less fossil fuel intensive forms of mobility"



**FOCUS ON GETTING** people walking at your event, using bikes, public transport and other less fossil fuel intensive forms of mobility. Flying will be your biggest climate impact, so where possible choose a destination closest to most delegates. Prioritise the use of train travel, public transport, walking and biking; and recommend airlines that use biofuels and have low carbon strategies.

Engage organisers and delegates to offset all remaining emissions in a project that regenerates local nature areas and communities. Make offsetting so compelling that it is a given, and part of the event experience.

COVID-19 has multiplied the quantity and quality of digital solutions. Extend your reach, improve the inclusivity of your event and reduce your footprint by creating hybrid events that offer unique experiences for participants who are both online and onsite.







## IMEX



**The #Natureworks research showed** that in 2019, less than **5%** of event organisers offset the carbon impact of their events, and only **17%** were promoting train travel in place of short-haul flights.

The **IMEX** team are focusing on encouraging hosted buyers living within a five-hour journey time to take trains to **IMEX** in Frankfurt in 2021. Currently **17%** of hosted buyers take a train to the show. The carbon emissions of all hosted buyer flights and shuttle buses are offset by a partnership with the Costa Rica Tourism Board.





ijmex | Marriott  
INTERNATIONAL

# 7

RE-ENERGISE  
AND EMPOWER

**REGENERATION REQUIRES ENGAGEMENT**, collaboration and empowerment. Invite and inspire your talent, contractors and participants to support your efforts, take responsibility and co-create the solutions. Discuss how your events can sustain and regenerate local cultures, communities, and nature.

Work with local government, academia, businesses, NGOs and social enterprises to create nature-based solutions to regenerate local ecosystems and improve people's livelihoods in the face of climate threats and social change. This could include the conservation and restoration of forest and other terrestrial ecosystems; the conservation and restoration of rivers and ocean ecosystems; sustainable agriculture and food systems, and optimising nature's contribution to resilient livelihoods, green infrastructure and healthier communities.

Consider bringing your resource management actions to the front of house (composting, food donation, resource separation), and make them participatory. Include your delegates as a key element to this approach by encouraging their creativity and consumer power in action through social innovation and outreach projects. It will make them feel good, more connected to the community and to each other, and increase their overall experience of the event.



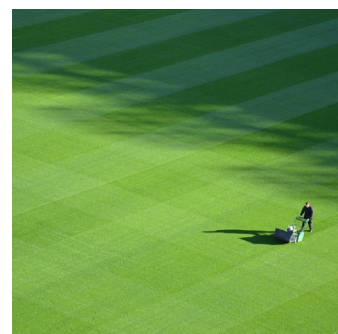
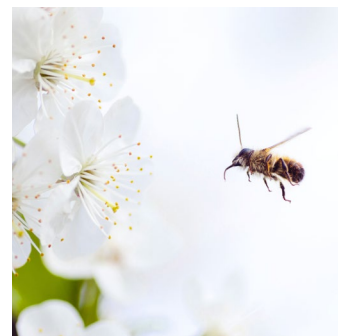


## Croke Park Stadium revitalising the community

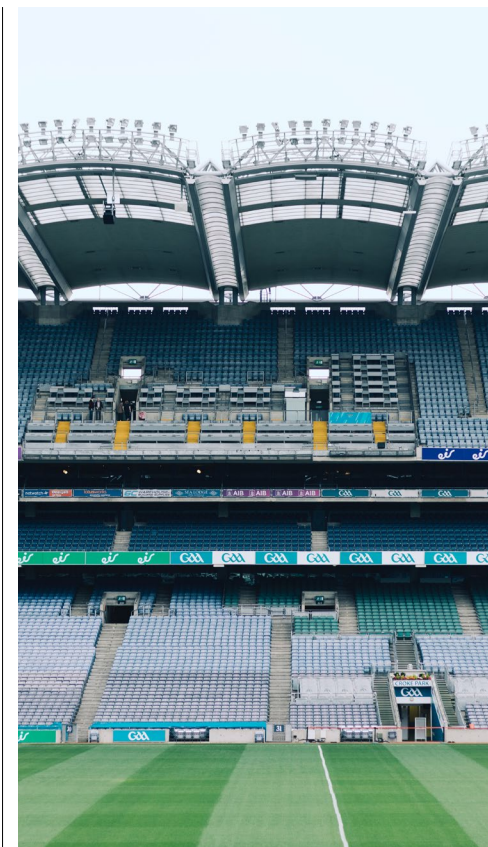
**Developing the value** in an organisation may represent itself as the need to nurture staff, clients, supply chain partners and other stakeholders. By taking a regenerative approach to community management, the development of social capital can be stimulated and enhanced. Croke Park Stadium in Dublin espouses this approach. The stadium, which is a business member of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, implements an urban biodiversity programme that

includes the installation on stadium grounds of bird boxes for native bird populations and of insect habitats such as bee bricks and bug hotels as well as a planting programme of native trees and pollinator-friendly ground cover.

Outside the stadium walls, Croke Park's sustainability and community teams have partnered with local authorities and residents on initiatives for the thoughtful greening of neglected spaces in the local area.



**This investment in** people and place contributes to the sense of belonging and wellbeing that is shared by residents and stadium employees alike.



**THE CROKE PARK** approach to sustainability and community ensures that the stadium generates not only employment and business opportunities in the area but also engenders huge pride of place in the local community. This investment in people and place contributes to the sense of belonging and wellbeing that is shared by residents and stadium employees alike. It has enabled Croke Park to act as the heart of the complex and vibrant community of Dublin's North Inner City.



SECTION THREE



# 8

REPORT  
YOUR IMPACT

**SHARE YOUR STRATEGIES,** performance against your goals, your successes and failures. Redefine and reselect your key performance indicators to focus on measuring economic, social and environmental outcomes, not just their activities. Understand the true value that your event is generating for its participants, for the sector it convenes, and for the host community where it is held. Use a reporting framework such as **GRI** (Global Reporting Initiative) to disclose your impacts; carbon emissions, water, resource usage and circularity, renewable energy production/usage, community impact, economic impact, job creation etc. Share facts and stories about how your organisation is closing the loop, regenerating communities, and contributing to the **UN** (United Nations) Sustainable Development Goals. Finally use the reporting process to engage stakeholders to review and learn from your experiences to maximise positive impact and minimise negative impact the next time around.



SECTION THREE





## CASE STUDY: ORACLE OPENWORLD

**ORACLE OPENWORLD SAN FRANCISCO** is the world's largest conference for Oracle customers and technologists attracting over 80,000 visitors at each event. Oracle started their journey towards producing a sustainable event in 2009.

From the start measuring and transparent reporting was a core pillar and priority of their strategy. Since then they have produced 11 sustainability reports with detailed social and environmental impact disclosure and benchmarking. These reports have used data, comparability and stories of success to inspire the corporation and others to step up, scale up and accelerate their sustainability efforts.

**Their 2019 Sustainability Report** is an example of best practice in event reporting highlighting their strategy, results and core practices. It shares that their 2019 key goals were targeting zero waste to landfill, reducing CO2 emissions by 50%, catalysing legacies to benefit host destinations and inspiring attendees through engaging experiences.



### IN 2019 THEY MANAGED TO ACHIEVE:

**67%** of waste diverted from landfill  
**50%** reduction in onsite carbon emissions since 2012

**100%** of onsite carbon emissions offset **514 kg** of event furniture, and **575 kg** of backpacks, socks, toiletry bags, lanyards, and office supplies donated to local agencies/charities  
**1,621** meals donated event-wide to organisations serving those in need.



2020/21  
TALKING  
POINT

# NATURE





**"Wisdom demands we** see ourselves as one system, embedded in, not separate from, the sacred Blue Marble that is our only home. Wisdom demands we source our future prosperity by harnessing the immense potential available if we align our economy with the patterns and principles of living systems, as if we intended our economy to behave like a living system that sustains itself over long periods of time...Such wisdom is aligned not only with modern living systems science, but also with the teachings of Indigenous cultures around the world." →

**John Fullerton**, The Capital Institute



ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION TO A

# REGENERATIVE EVENTS ECONOMY

## SECTION FOUR





## Final word

### Time for change

**THE LINEAR EVENTS** economy is ripe for disruption and reinvention as has been demonstrated by the hypergrowth of online events and innovative technologies in 2020. Meanwhile COVID-19 is changing our cities, ways of working, socialising, travelling and meeting.

As many of our businesses struggle to survive, and innovate to recover, we must take full advantage of the wealth of opportunities to rethink and redesign a regenerative events ecosystem that can work long-term for our businesses, society, and environment.

A future fit, thriving regenerative events economy will depend on public-private and cross-sector collaboration on an unprecedented scale.

Our research has shown that current industry, business and government commitments and skills levels are inadequate for the scale of the challenge. Only **12%** of the **1,500** event professionals responded that their business had an advanced sustainability strategy. **49%** said they were only just beginning the journey, and **42%** have not even started considering circularity in their planning.

## SECTION FOUR

### Step up, scale up and accelerate

**TO GUARANTEE THE** success of our industry requires commitment and collaboration to radically scale and accelerate the:

**Development** of new circular and regenerative business models

**Design** of more sustainable and regenerative products, materials, and technologies

**Creation** of new private, public, people partnerships (4Ps)

**Investment** into new start-ups and business units

**Procurement** of zero emissions products and services

**WE BELIEVE THE** meetings and events sector should follow the example of other industries and set a 2030 transition **road map**. This long-range strategic plan would define a vision and scenarios for restorative, resilient, inclusive and zero carbon growth. It would set out actionable measures on innovation, policy, public-private partnerships, and the finance required to transform industries. These roadmaps are developed not only to forecast the future, but also to serve as a platform for discussion of future challenges by all those involved.



## Opportunities at hand

**MANY OF THE KEY OPPORTUNITIES** are within reach and do not require major investment or development. Our research of 1,500 event professionals revealed that the two top accelerators to change were:

**BETTER EDUCATION FOR** inhouse teams and suppliers  
**HAVING SUPPLIERS THAT** offered more sustainable and regenerative options.

The key sectors that are ripe for rapid innovation were identified as **food production and service, venue/hotel design and mobility**. The insights gained from this report give us hope and offer optimism. The industry professionals and organisations that produce our events, and cities that host them want change. The big brands are already on a circular race of innovation, and existing solutions already can solve about **80%** of the problems. A shift to regenerative event management provides unique opportunities and value for destinations, businesses, associations and innovators ready to lead the transition to a world within which we all can thrive.

## FINAL WORD

**"Each one of us matters, has a role to play, and makes a difference. You have to decide what kind of difference you want to make"**

Dr Jane Goodall

**What happens next** is up to us

**THE FUTURE IS** unwritten. What happens next is up to us. Humanity came onto this earth with the potential to evolve and our time is now to grow as a species, not just ever-larger and ever-more-consuming, but ever more intelligent, creative, and conscious.

We invite you to be part of the Regenerative Revolution and engage with your colleagues, suppliers and clients to spend more time in nature and observe its innovation and diverse complexity so you can accelerate your actions to regenerate your communities and magical spaces.



**PLEASE JOIN IN** the conversation and share your questions on social media at **#Natureworks #IMEX.** ■



## About the author

**GUY BIGWOOD, FIEMA.**  
Managing Director,  
GDS-Movement



**FOR THE LAST** 15 years, Guy has been delivering award-winning consulting services focused on helping cities, governments, associations and the hospitality industry step up, scale up and speed up their sustainability programmes and circular operational practices.

He is a recognised expert on creating sustainable and regenerative destinations, communities, and events through multi stakeholder collaboration. Guy is the Managing Director of the **GDS-Movement**; that unites and enables destination management professionals to create flourishing and resilient places to visit, meet and live in. Its 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.

From 2006 to 2018, Guy was the Sustainability Director of MCI, the world's largest association management, communications, and events agency. He launched and developed a CSR programme across the corporation's 60 offices, developing a business strategy



that positioned MCI to be an award-winning sustainability champion, and the organiser and consultant of over 1000 events and exhibitions about sustainable development, smart cities, and energy.

Guy is a passionate and outstanding communicator, who has delivered over 440 keynote presentations and facilitated workshops engaging over 40,000 participants in more than 40 countries. He teaches Regenerative Leadership at ESADE Business School.

Guy's pioneering work has been recognised with 22 sustainability awards including the prestigious Events Industry Council Pacesetter Award and with recognition as a Fellow of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (FIEMA). He has co-written three sustainable event guidebooks for the United Nations, and helped developed over 10 sustainability standards. He was previously the president of the Green Meetings Industry Council.



PLEASE CONNECT with Guy  
on [linkedin.com/guybigwood](https://www.linkedin.com/in/guybigwood).



## Recommended reading

### REGENERATIVE LEADERSHIP

**Regenerative Leadership** - excellent book and leadership training by Giles Hutchins and Laura Storm.

**Designing regenerative cultures** - great book and super blog with inspirational deep thinking from Dr Daniel Christian Wahl.

**Donut Economics** - big transformative thinking and practical framework from Kate Raworth.

**Conscious Travel** - informative website and blogging from one of the key pioneers of regenerative tourism – Anna Pollock.

**The Dawn of the Regenerative Age:** The Capital Institute is a transdisciplinary collaborative launched by former JP Morgan Managing Director John Fullerton to reimagine economics and finance.

**Green Swans** - John Elkington, the grandfather of sustainability delivers another groundbreaking book. This time about the “Coming Boom in Regenerative Capitalism.”

### CIRCULAR ECONOMY

**Ellen MacArthur Foundation** - the go to source for information on the Circular Economy. Indepth reports, online learning, frameworks, case studies and lots more.

**Rethinking progress** - powerful video from Dame - Ellen MacArthur.

**To dive deeper** into circularity and regeneration we strongly recommend the following guides, whitepapers and websites. They have provided inspiration, ideas and insights on our journey.



**UNWTO Global Tourism Plastics Initiative.** Collaboration between UNWTO and Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Good guide about Taking Action on Plastic Pollution during COVID-19 Recovery.

**The Circular Humansphere.** Excellent paper and blogs from Alexandre Lemille on regeneration and “Making the circular economy work for human development.”

**Circular Economy in Travel and Tourism:** Stefan Einarsson and Fabrice Sorin brilliantly introduce key principles, concepts and a conceptual framework to the circular economy.

### CIRCULAR EVENT GUIDES

**Toolkit waste-free festivals** - excellent toolkit developed by Festival organisers, Nederland Schoon (‘Clean Netherlands’) and the Dutch government.

**Sustainable Look and Overlay** an issue review and industry scan about the use of plastics and materials in large events. Lots of great ideas, supplier recommendations and experiences. Written by Meegan Jones for the Ocean Race.

### REGENERATIVE DESTINATIONS

**Global Destination Sustainability Movement** – a community of DMOs and municipalities collaborating on the development of regenerative travel, events, and destinations. Underpinned by the GDS-Index, a benchmarking and performance improvement programme for regeneration.



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21. **WASTE** to Wealth - Accenture
22. **NEW** Plastics Economy: Ellen MacArthur Foundation
23. **GREEN** Swans: The Coming Boom in Regenerative Capitalism by John Elkington
24. **REGENERATIVE** capitalism paper - by John Fullerton
25. **LUSH** Prize: Raising the profile of regeneration and its potential
26. **CIRCULAR** Humansphere - by Alexandre Lemille
27. **OECD** Business Models for the Circular Economy
28. **LOOPSTORE.COM**/sustainability
29. **BIOMIMICRY** Institute
30. **IMEX** Sustainable Exhibiting Guide
31. **LEANPATH** Case study of Sheraton Grand Hotel & Spa ■