



Sustainable Development Goals

Guide for the filming sector

Sustainable Development Goals as guide for the film sector.

Many film professionals are unaware of their impact when it comes to sustainability. 'F%CK' is therefore a common reaction when they are confronted with this theme. Not only in the sense of 'Do I have an influence as a professional in the audiovisual sector?', but also because of the major positive role that you can play. As a team, an individual, a student, employee or employer, a writer, a creator, an exhibitor, a funder, teacher or local film commissioner... One of the most common questions is 'what is sustainability?'.

The media is constantly raising the alarm about all sorts of problems, big and small. We hear about geopolitical relations, banking crises, ice caps, natural disasters, ozone layers, migration, disappearing biodiversity etc. Are they relevant to the audiovisual sector and what can our contribution be? In order to answer this complicated question, it is important to understand the meaning of sustainability. Here reference is often made to the Brundtland report. It states that: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

When people talk about sustainability, greenhouse gases are often involved. These gases influence our atmosphere. All kinds of things are said about the molecule CO₂. It is just one of the various greenhouse gases. The sustainability debate is often reduced to cutting CO₂ in order to battle climate change. Climate change, natural or man-induced has a major impact on our planet. Plant and animal species, including Homo sapiens, are affected by climate change. However this is just part of the story, sustainability is much broader. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of the United Nations can serve as a narrative or moral compass. Specialists from all over the world defined 17 sustainable goals. These are much broader than the CO₂ debate. This approach is human and recognisable; themes such as gender, equality, education, consumption, climate and biodiversity appeal more to the imagination than, say, CO₂. That is why the Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF) has chosen to use these SDGs as a moral compass.

Many actions are easier to categorise via these SDGs. For example, if you donate leftover food from catering to a social project, then you are directly addressing hunger, poverty and consumption. Look at the SDGs as a source of inspiration. This article tries to inspire you, as a filmmaker, writer, funder, or host of a film event. This manuscript will make the SDG's more concrete, with the focus on the audiovisual sector. The aim is to inspire you!



1. No poverty

‘Samuel in the clouds’ documents the impact of climate change on Samuel and his ski resort. As a viewer you are confronted with Samuel’s daily struggle and hope for the snow to return to his ski resort high in the Bolivian mountains. When finishing the production, Pieter Van Eecke and his team decided not only to pay Samuel for his work, but they also looked for ways to strengthen the local community. They screened the documentary for the local community and gave them a voice, but also spent part of their budget locally. By supporting local people, they contributed in the fight against poverty.



2. No hunger

You all know it: bad catering and you have an unpleasant crew. Catering makes up about 8% of the total environmental impact of a production. Where does our food come from? Is it locally sourced and seasonal? Can you promote vegetarian food, knowing that the environmental impact of agroindustry for the production of meat is high? All are important considerations at production level.

Meet Yara. She is a young mother that is part of the 'Borstfiguranten project'. This 'Breastfeeding actors' project from a Belgian health organisation illustrates the importance of film as a medium. They look for young mothers willing to breast feed their babies for film and TV productions. Their aim is to promote breast-feeding. If evaluated with the SDG's, breastfeeding on screen is hyper sustainable: you not only fight hunger, but increase the mental wellbeing of mother and child, prevent breast cancer, don't use fossil fuel to heat the milk, reduce the amount of packaging (of artificial milk), reduce transport, prevent waste on land or in sea etc. It is a simple but subtle choice, that doesn't affect your budget! And no, there should not be a breastfeeding mother in every film. Just an awareness that sustainability can be that subtle.



3. Good health

Health on set is an important issue. Respecting health and safety regulations and safeguarding the cast and crew's wellbeing is also another form of sustainability.

Cleo, a film directed by Eva Cools, is an inspiring example of how small choices matter. During the break down meeting Eva expressed her not willing to have a specific chocolate paste on set. Not only because of environmental considerations, the paste contains palm oil, but even more for health issues (some chemicals might be unhealthy). Eva took the time to talk this through with her cast and crew, explained them why she made this choice and why she and her team invested in healthy food on set. And yes, during the entire production there was a local, healthier alternative choco spread!



4. Quality education

The Flanders Audiovisual Fund not only supports audiovisual projects financially, it also plays a key role in talent development. It guides new professionals at the start of their career. Actions include workshops about storytelling, internships at animation studios, Wild Card competition for your talent (including financial production support), VAF summerschool and where relevant, there is a focus on sustainability. More info on <https://www.vaf.be/talentontwikkeling>

VAF

**VLAAMS
AUDIOVISUEEL
FONDS**

5. Gender Equality

Gender plays an important role, both on and off screen. 'Girl' is an award winning film made by Lukas Dhondt tells the story of Laura. It is the story of a boy wanting to be a girl wanting to become a ballerina. But it is also the story of love, of a father loving his children, of acceptance and following dreams and passions. With this film, the director highly influenced society. 'Girl' literally put the gender debate on the agenda!



6. Clean water and sanitation

Drinking water plays an important role on a film set. The entire cast and crew need a reliable and safe water supply. In many cases bottled water or water fountains are the traditional logistic choice, but tap water is a budget friendly, safe and reliable solution.

An average film production uses a substantial amount of drinking water. The origin of this water (tap water vs. bottled water) and how it is consumed (single use cups vs. reusable cups and canteens) has an important impact on the sustainability of a production. Know that an average production easily produces 10 000 consumptions; this would represent about 9m³ of plastic waste.



10 000

7. Renewable energy

5% of the average CO₂ impact of a feature film is related to energy. The artistic choices highly influence the power needs of a film set. Can one use natural light or is artificial light needed? If so, can they be plugged in in the public power grid? Is there local power available on or nearby the film

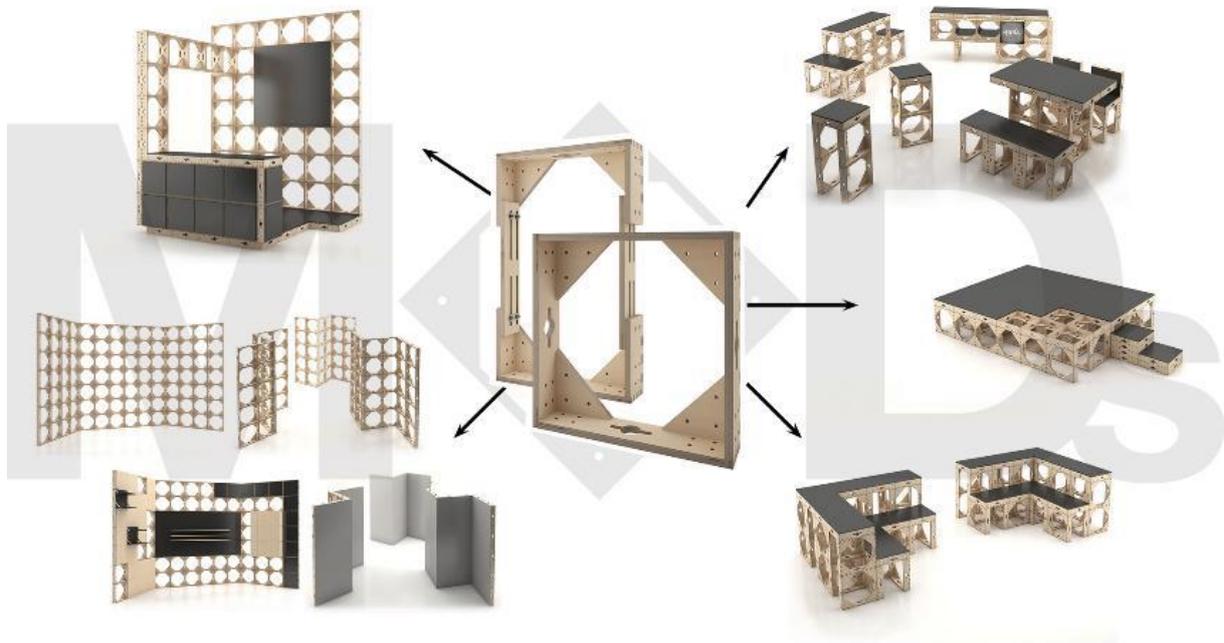
set? BUCK, a TV fiction produced by Zodiak and the Flemish broadcaster VRT, opted for a distribution box with green energy. This box is normally used as a temporal power supply for building sites. It provided renewable power during 63 of the 72 shooting days.

This logistic choice enabled BUCK to limit the use of a traditional generator drastically. This not only reduced their overall power cost (approx. 12 000 euro), but also led to a CO₂ saving of at least 36 tons. Additional positive effects were the noise reduction on the set and its surrounding residential location and not having to refuel a generator.



8. Good jobs and economic growth

It might sound like a contradiction, but sustainability and economic growth go hand in hand. New innovative business models can help crews to work more sustainably and also create new jobs. An inspirational example are MODS. These modular wooden frames allow for an easy, reliable and waste free construction of sets and other constructions. It's like Lego; once you are finished you just take it apart. These modules can be a film set, a music stage, an office desk, a film festival stand. The modules can be rented and reused again and again. They are a perfect example on how innovative circular economy entrepreneurship works! More info on www.mymods.be



9. Innovation and infrastructure

Sustainability can be about personal engagement and daily behaviour. Convincing crew members to carpool or prevent waste are simple low-tech options. But in some cases new and innovative technology can be the solution. An inspiring example can be found in Paris. The residual heat of the servers of an animation company is recuperated via a system of heat exchangers this warmth is used to heat a nearby swimming pool. More info on www.stimergy.fr

Within the framework of Green Screen, a European project on sustainable production, a comprehensive list of new innovations with relevance for the audiovisual sector was developed. By showcasing these innovations hopefully more and more logistic providers will be convinced to make available these innovations.

10. Reduced inequalities

Inequalities are an important topic, both on and behind the screen. How are people treated on your set? Do you give the young and unexperienced the opportunity to gain professional knowledge? How about safety and working hours? Are men and women paid equally? How are people portrayed in your film?

11. Sustainable cities and communities

Cinema Nova, an arthouse cinema based in Brussels is an inspiring example on how cinema brings people together. They screen non-commercially distributed films in their original version (using their own subtitling technology), they also host numerous local (film related) events and make available their infrastructure for beginner filmmakers. In the bar they opt for local drinks and food. They are much more than just a cinema, but a meeting point in the city of Brussels. From this point of view, they play an important role in society. More info <https://www.nova-cinema.org>



12. Responsible consumption

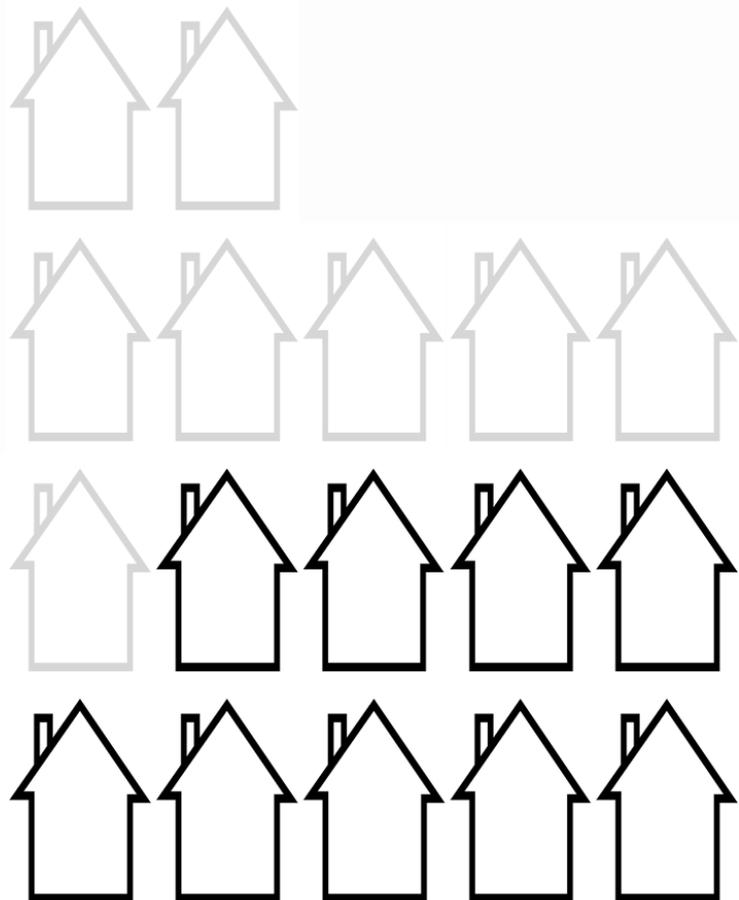
28% of the average production impact is related to waste and materials. Think about all the packaging, paper, food leftovers, empty bottles or single use cups, batteries etc. but also about the materials used for set construction and decoration. By making clever choices a cast and crew can decrease this amount tremendously. Buying in bulk, working paperless, using 2nd hand goods, renting instead of buying and so on.

Harvard University Graduate School of Design granted Belgian architect Aude Line Dulière, a Belgian architect with experience in set construction, with the Wheelwright Prize. Her project 'Crafted Images: Material Flows, Techniques, and Uses in Set Design' not only portrays craftsmanship in the film industry, but also links this with material use and eco-design. Where do we source our materials, how do we construct and decorate sets and how can we dismantle, reuse and recycle our sets intelligently? More info on <http://wheelwrightprize.org/>

13. Climate action

The average TV and film production have a measurable environmental impact. On average, a feature film in Flanders produces 73 tons of CO₂, the equivalent of 10 households per year. Buck, a TV production of VRT, the Flemish public broadcaster, and Zodiak Belgium was a school example of sustainable production. Their sustainable decisions included carpooling, local power supply, limiting the use of trucks, promoting vegetarian food, going paperless and using water canteens. These actions allowed them to reduce their CO₂ impact from 123 to 62 tons!

BUCK =



14. Life below water

Flotsam is a game developed by Pajama Llama Games (with VAF financial support). The aim of this game is to collect waste at sea and recuperate this waste to create a new society. In a way this game is a Trojan horse: in a subtle way the players are confronted with the plastic problem at sea and the importance of sustainable material management. This makes Flotsam much more than just entertainment. Moreover, external organisations working on waste management and sustainability can form important partners for Flotsam. Flotsam reaches thousands of players that might never be

aware of circular economy and material management; external partners could support Flotsam with both finances as content.



15. Life on land

We have more in common than we think with the people responsible for the management of our natural and heritage sites. For the film sector these sites form the best filming locations. But how should we organise in order not to damage the vulnerable ecosystem? Are we aware of how our trucks might compact soils, how the noise of our generators might affect animal species or how long it takes for a forgotten cigarette butt to disintegrate or do you know how a drone can affect animal behaviour? By being aware of our impact we can help to protect these valuable sites. But managers of natural areas can also help us to be more sustainable. Their field knowledge and infrastructure can help us in finding alternative local power supplies, overnight parking for trucks and ways to prevent waste.

Furthermore, film can make nature's beauty accessible to society. How many biologists became inspired by David Attenborough's work?

16. Peace and justice

And they live happily ever after...

Film can be seen as the flight simulator for mankind: they confront us with a wide array of situations and emotions and push us to self-reflect. It is an important tool in storytelling. How do we know about the immense chaos after the dropping of an atom bomb? Science fiction helped us to create an image. The impact of war? The bad guy in a gangster movie? We as film makers and writers should be aware of our societal role.

17. Partnerships for the goals

Pulse is a Flemish transition network for youth, culture and media. It groups thousands of professionals around the theme of sustainability. Pulse plays an important role in connecting these people and their organisations.

How can someone inspire and help me to be more sustainable at my job? What can a film crew learn from a festival or vice versa? How to interact and discuss sustainable topics with your public during events? Or how to use our creative language to create a sustainable narrative? More info on www.pulsenetwerk.be

