

## **MSUS Culminating Experience Executive Summary**

Sustainable Sound: Festival Guide

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Across the world, music festivals draw in millions of fans and generate billions in revenue. Although the festival scene is trendy, stakeholders are beginning to evaluate its negative impacts. When improperly managed, festivals damage natural systems, lose opportunities to support and engage with their fans, exclude local businesses, and ignore ethical supply chains.

To satisfy the increased market demand for sustainable music festivals and to better align their operations with their organization's values, festival organizers seek ways to improve their events. However, multiple barriers, such as financial restrictions, knowledge gaps, and lack of attendee engagement, prevent them from doing so. *Sustainable Sound: Festival Guide* has been created in partnership with M3F Fest, The Cosanti Foundation, and ASU's Campus Student Sustainability Initiatives (CSSI) to overcome the barriers and plan resource positive music festivals.

*Sustainable Sound* is based on The Mair and Jago Green Event Framework. The Mair and Jago framework was selected because it uses a systemic approach that is straightforward, thorough, and easy to follow. However, to compensate for its lack of specifics on operation changes and attendee engagement strategies: existing green event guides, market-based research, academic articles, interviews with subject matter experts, festival case studies, festival site visits, and firsthand experience working with M3F Fest was used in the creation of the guide. Researching existing guides and world-leading sustainable festivals helped to establish a benchmark for the success of this

project. For the guidebook to be successful, it must adequately address all of the relevant festival components in a way that satisfies the project partners.

In an attempt to achieve this goal, *Sustainable Sound* is composed of five specific sections. *Part I: Planning for Sustainability* provides strategies to create a sustainability vision. Methods to reduce the impacts of audience travel, energy, waste, water, production, and food and drinks comprise *Part II: Operation Changes*. *Part III: Attendee Engagement*, includes lessons about gamification, workshops, design, and harm prevention. Details concerning marketing, annual reporting, and data collection exist in *Part IV: Information Sharing*. Lastly, *Part V: Collaboration* expresses the importance of connecting with: municipalities, underserved communities, green festival organizations, other festivals, and schools.

To assess client satisfaction, all project partners completed a questionnaire reviewing the first draft of the guidebook. The results of the questionnaire were mostly positive. The combined average score given to all of the sections of *Sustainable Sound* by all three partners was 4.96 out of 5. While all of the partners were content with the guide, they did provide suggestions on how it could be improved. Several of these suggestions were incorporated in the final version of the guidebook, such as including additional resources and the author's contact information. However, there was also feedback that was not included in the guide due to time constraints. One suggestion, adding a section about land preservation and history, was not addressed. While this topic is not covered in the first iteration of *Sustainable Sound*, it inspires future edits or potential follow-up projects for others.

Based upon the client feedback, *Sustainable Sound: Festival Guide* is a comprehensive guide, capable of advancing the sustainable music festival industry. The three project partners will utilize it when planning their events. Additionally, it is available as a free download on in the School of Sustainability's Graduate Culminating Experience Repository. Looking to the future, *Sustainable Sound* has the potential to be implemented by other festival organizations and to be reviewed and improved by forthcoming students.