



De Grote Post

Action plan sustainability

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1 Introduction

De Grote Post is a cultural house in Belgium, located in the city of Ostend within walking distance of the sea. In 2012 the building transformed from a postal building into a cultural house and venue. Today there are two theater halls and eleven versatile rooms with different capacities. In our program you can find several festivals and a range of performances within the fields of theater, comedy, music, talks and everything in between. We are a house where artist, visitor, organizer can meet and inspire each other.

At De Grote Post, we endorse the importance of a sustainable policy. Such a policy naturally has many facets. In this document, we focus on actions we can take in terms of ecological sustainability. Of course, the action plan can be expanded with points related to other aspects, such as social or economic sustainability.

The goal is to have a plan with clear, achievable, yet ambitious actions, tailored to the available time and resources. When drafting the plan, we started from the pre-audit conducted to obtain the Green Key label. We were also part of a three year Erasmus+ training program from Fulcrum: "sustainability at the centre: making culture and environment meet", which helped us to gain important knowledge for our action plan.



Green Key

De Grote Post is part of Flanders Heritage Venues, within which we followed a trajectory to obtain the Green Key label. Green Key is an international quality label for tourism, MICE, and leisure. The label supports various locations in working more sustainable and highlights those that have achieved the label. This way, visitors, artists, and clients know that De Grote Post is taking action to contribute to a livable world.

To obtain the label, we completed a questionnaire divided into different domains. From this, we can deduce that we have already taken many actions within our operations, including areas like energy, water, catering, waste, etc. The domains where we score lower are internal communication (staff involvement) and external communication to visitors. With this advice, we mapped out the necessary actions for both short and long term. Since January 2026 we obtained the label.

Erasmus+ program Fulcrum

From October 2024 until March 2026 we participated in the Erasmus+ project about sustainability. During this program we gained knowledge about different sustainable topics in connection to the cultural field. We exchanged ideas and good practices with colleagues within Europe and received guidance for our action plan. After the program a booklet was formed and several action plans were made which can be consulted on the ENCC website.

Expert group sustainability

Within De Grote Post, expert groups are established to drive strategic themes such as sustainability. The group exists of two colleagues who meet every two months to coordinate efforts, assess progress, and shape the next steps in the action plan. The two colleagues for the sustainability team are:

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2 Communication

We have developed several action points to improve our communication both internally and externally.

2.1 Welcome Brochure for new colleagues

Since september 2025, we have a welcome brochure for new employees. This brochure informs new colleagues about our internal sustainability practices.

We want all colleagues to be conscious of energy consumption at De Grote Post. When a new colleague starts, we explain our sustainability policy and have established agreements to encourage more mindful consumption. The first version of the brochure was created in September 2025, outlining these agreements. After its creation, some additional points emerged that we may include in a second edition. The topics in the brochure are:

- Explanation of Green Key

For second edition: De Grote Post obtained the label since January 2026 and started to collect data (monthly) about our energy consumption.

- Sustainable practices: heating, lighting, devices, space usage & water
- Ecosia browser

For second edition: if you prefer another browser, make sure to disable automatic AI responses.

- Waste sorting
- Mobility

For second edition: De Grote Post has a Bluebike subscription that employees can use for travel

The welcome brochure is accessible to all colleagues on a fixed location on our internal server.

2.2 Info brochure for artists and organizers

Our production team has created a brochure with practical agreements and information for artists and organizers visiting De Grote Post. Since this season, we've added two new points:

- Waste sorting
- Sustainability

This way, we also communicate to them that De Grote Post aims to operate sustainably. Every summer before the new season starts, we review and update the brochure as needed.

2.3 Agreement with residents

De Grote Post supports emerging creators through its residency program by offering space, lunch, and accommodation. We also reimburse public transport to encourage its use. Due to decor or technical equipment, public transport is not always feasible. In such cases, we encourage artists to use shared mobility options like carpooling.

2.4 Website

We've added a dedicated sustainability page to our website. It outlines the actions we've taken to operate more sustainably. This page serves as a foundation for communicating our sustainability policy to the public. We continue to develop this page and regularly add new actions.

2.5 Ticket buyers and visitors

We aim to encourage our ticket buyers and visitors to make sustainable choices in various ways. At the very least, we want to inform them about our sustainability efforts.

Ticket buyers

When purchasing a ticket, we explicitly state that it does not need to be printed. It can be downloaded as a PDF or scanned via QR code on a smartphone.

As the event approaches, ticket buyers receive a pre-show email with practical information about

their visit to De Grote Post. This includes a link to our accessibility page, where we deliberately list "By public transport" and "By bike" above "By car."

Lokettenzaal and Grote Foyer

We have a semi-public space in our building that used to have general waste bins. We explored to possible to work with Salubris to have custom-made bins for waste sorting. Salubris visited the location in summer 2025, and since December 2025 we have the new bins.



Social Media

In October 2025, we created a plan for possible social media actions related to sustainability for the 2025-2026 season:

- January: post about obtaining the Green key label on our Facebook, Instagram and website.
- From 21st of March until 22nd of April we will post about a specific sustainable action with Buitengoed vzw (see 7.1)

We aim to repeat and evaluate this annually

3 Paper use & digitization

We have initiated several actions to reduce our paper consumption.

3.1 Printing

We encourage the use of scrap paper for printing and raise awareness among colleagues by placing reminders near the printer.

3.2 Signage

Our building includes eleven multipurpose rooms, three theater halls, and various office spaces. As a result, navigating the building is not always straightforward. Until two to three years ago, we created custom signage for each organizer or performance, which led to excessive paper use. We have consciously decided to stop this practice and now use fixed signage.

Nevertheless, we need to continue exploring alternatives, as visitors often lose their way in the building. Within De Grote Post, we have an expert group on "Accessibility." We've asked this group to investigate sustainable options and the associated investment costs.

3.3 Digitization of information

We use a digital planning system called Yesplan to collect all practical information about events. Various teams input data, and other teams need to access it. This includes parking, accommodation, catering, and the number of tables, chairs, and technical equipment required.

We are currently taking steps to make this information more accessible and automatically extract it from Yesplan, reducing the need for printing. In the first phase, we focus on the flow of information from the production team to the reception staff.

Since August 2025, we have started digitizing our call sheets, which were previously printed for each event. This not only reduces paper usage but also improves team efficiency. During the 2025-2026 season, we are testing this approach and collecting feedback from colleagues to improve it each summer.

Additionally, we are mapping out what information each team needs from Yesplan and how they prefer to receive it.

4 Data collection

An important step that needs to be taken is the collection of all consumption data. There are various tools available to gather and analyze this data, but since we are participating in the Green Key trajectory, we have chosen to use the HCM Tool provided by Green Key. We started this since January 2026.

Based on this data, we can identify action points across different domains. De Grote Post is a heritage building with many halls, offices, and corridors. Visitors, artists, clients, and colleagues all contribute to the building's consumption.

Therefore, we aim to collect the following data: Electricity & gas

- Water
- Waste
- Mobility

This will allow us to efficiently track measurements from 2026 onward and perform analyses to identify further action points.

Besides tracking our consumption monthly, we also participated in a pilot project organized by Flanders Heritage Venues (October 2025 - January 2026). This pilot project was aimed to measure the CO₂ footprint of one specific event. The first step was to choose a measurement tool; as a participant we now have a free license for one year for My Impact Tool. In December 2025 we measured a first event and made a report about it. We will try to measure more events and determine which actions we can take to improve our footprint and circularity.





5 Research

5.1 Connection to the District Heating Network

We aim to connect our building to the district heating network of the city of Ostend to reduce our energy consumption. Previous research has already explored whether this is technically feasible, and several scenarios have been outlined. This would require structural interventions in the building, which come with certain costs.

Since the city of Ostend owns the building, we have asked them to further investigate the feasibility—both technically and financially. In summer 2025, the city invited us to join the RODEO project to accelerate the rollout of the heating network in central Ostend. One staff member from De Grote Post attends the information and work sessions to assess feasibility and associated costs. The project runs from 2025 to 2029.

5.2 Solar Panels

Another option that has been investigated is the installation of solar panels. Unfortunately, it has been determined that this is not technically feasible for the roof of De Grote Post.

6 Catering

At events, we also provide food and drinks. We consciously consider sustainable choices in both offerings and suppliers.

6.1 Rental

When renting a hall and requesting catering and/or drinks, we collaborate with CultuurCafé. They offer a varied menu with vegetarian and vegan options.

6.2 Artist Catering

For artist lunches or dinners, we work with local caterers such as CultuurCafé, Chef on the Move, and Madame Couvert. These caterers prioritize seasonal ingredients and local vendors.

We default to vegetarian meals for all artists. If they want meat, they must explicitly request it. This approach helps us gradually promote more vegetarian and vegan choices.

6.3 Schaft (staff lunch)

De Grote Post has a large residency program where we provide free lunch, known as schaft. A few years ago, this included both meat and vegetarian options, but since the 2023–2024 season, we've decided to make it fully vegetarian.

The lunch is freshly prepared by our volunteers, fully vegetarian, and we focus on products with minimal packaging. We collaborate with the local Spar so volunteers can pick up orders on foot. At the buffet, we always include a short explanation of the concept so that both colleagues and residents are aware of the sustainable choices.



7 Programmation

7.1 Initiatives

Brieventsunami

During a training on climate and culture, 30CC from Leuven presented the Brieventsunami initiative. This is a letter-writing campaign aimed at urging Belgian climate ministers to take responsibility and act courageously to meet the EU's 2030 climate goals.

Twelve Belgian artists and writers were invited to write letters to the climate ministers to highlight the urgency. This was especially necessary since Belgium still lacked a climate plan as of early 2025.

Inspired by the training, De Grote Post joined the initiative to make it a regional campaign. From March 21 (start of spring) to April 21 2025, the action took place in various cultural centers and libraries, including De Grote Post:

“With a flood of letters, we want to hold our climate ministers accountable. Artists and writers found the right words and images for you and wrote letters to our climate ministers. Choose a letter, send it, and make your voice heard.”

We collected around 1,000 letters and, together with other organizations, delivered them to the Flemish Minister of Energy and Climate on April 30, 2025. The Minister made time for a conversation, thanked us for the Brieventsunami, and acknowledged the work needed to create a sustainable and socially just climate plan.

In October 2025, we decided to not renew this initiative in 2026 because of the limited resources and time.

Buitengoed vzw

After the decision was made to not renew the action Brieventsunami, we tried to find a more local initiative that we can manage in time and resources. That's why we choose to open a conversation with Buitengoed vzw in Ostend.

Buitengoed Oostende vzw was founded with a clear mission: to create and manage the Stadsrandbos forest in Ostend. This green ambition gave

rise to a multifaceted organization that today focuses on sustainable agriculture, nature experiences, and education. (<https://www.buitengoed.be/>)

They manage the farm, the farm shop, the urban forest and the organic pick-your-own garden. We decided to have a financial action where ticket buyers have the option to make an extra donation for them. The action started on spring (21/03/2026) until Earth Day (22/04/2026). During this period we posted about Buitengoed vzw on our social media to create more awareness. A local cultural partner KAAP also joined us with this action.

7.2 Carpooling to Vuurwerk Festival

From the sustainability working group, we wanted to test a specific mobility and connection initiative during our annual Vuurwerk Festival in December. Although De Grote Post is easily accessible, sustainable mobility is not always straightforward for some visitors. Our visitor survey shows that most people travel by car. We also hear that some people don't feel safe walking alone in the dark.

Given these findings, we've long wanted to develop something around visitor mobility. L' Aéronef, a concert hall in Lille, has a great system that promotes carpooling (covoiturage), walking together (copiétonnage), and cycling together (covélo). They have a webpage where you can offer routes and find others to ride, walk, or cycle with.

This not only benefits sustainability by reducing car use and encouraging cycling or walking, but also fosters connection between people. It can be a valuable tool to bring people together and lower barriers.

Our goal was to develop and test a basic concept during the 2025 edition, which we achieved. Unfortunately we noticed that our digital platform for the carpooling was not user friendly enough and we need to think about alternatives. We still believe in the concept on its own but we have to rethink how we want to develop it. This before the edition of Vuurwerk, April 2027.

8 Procurement policy

We aim to establish a clear procurement policy for the De Grote Post team. This action point is in development. We aim to implement it starting in the 2026-2027 season (from September 2026).

9 Priority Matrix

In 2024, the sustainability working group created a priority matrix to map out certain actions. We would like to repeat this exercise with each team at De Grote Post to further develop our action plan and map out actions in terms of time and resources.

The working group will develop a plan in fall 2025 to collect all actions by summer 2026. Some actions already identified by the working group that need further investigation with relevant teams:

- Ask suppliers who still send invoices by post to switch to digital delivery only.
- Cancel brochures received by post for former colleagues.
- Link sustainable programming to ecological projects via ticket sales (e.g., donate to plant a tree via BOS+).
- Explore reuse of old printed materials (e.g., Redopapers and Weerwerk).
- Replace plastic bottles on stage with reusable Doppert bottles (inspired by 4AD) and assess budget.
- Allocate an annual budget for sustainable initiatives and identify potential subsidy channels.
- Investigate additional green benefits for staff, such as eco vouchers and bike leasing.
- Our bank scores poorly via Fairfin. Changing banks is difficult due to our link with the city of Ostend. Can we apply symbolic pressure or join Fairfin actions?

With this action plan, we raise awareness among colleagues, artists, clients, and visitors of De Grote Post, reduce electricity consumption, lower CO₂ emissions, and indirectly support tree planting and climate projects.



Timeline actions

September 2023

Start sustainable lunch (schaft)

January 2024

- Kick-off sustainability expert group and development of work structure
- Make a priority mix

March 2025 - april 2025

Brieven tsunami

June 2025

- Audit for Green Key Label

June- September 2025

- Welcome brochure for colleagues, artists and organizers
- Sustainability page on our website
- custom made waste bins

October 2025

Plan social media actions for the season

October 2025 - january 2026

Pilot project for measuring CO₂ footprint per event

December 2025

Carpool initiative during VUURWERK festival

January 2026

- Obtained Green Key Label
- Start data collection

January 2026 - June 2026

- Develop a procurement policy
- make a priority matrix with the whole team of De Grote Post
- Measure CO₂ footprints for events

March 2026 - april 2026

Action Buitengoed vzw

