

# A sustainability concept for Lettrétage

*Final report on the study*

*ordered on 24.10.2022*

*Corinna Vosse & Ulrich Sommer*

*Berlin, 31.12.2022*

## Content

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Description of activities.....	3
3.	Environmental impacts.....	4
3.1	GHG emissions inventory results.....	4
3.2	Summary of the big points.....	8
4.	Recommendations.....	9
4.1	Recommendations for regular operations (not including projects).....	9
4.2	Recommendations for projects:.....	10
4.3	Additional recommendations.....	10
5.	Operational goals and planned measures.....	11
5.1	Events.....	11
5.2	Public relations.....	11
5.3	Consultations and projects.....	11
6.	Structures for anchoring sustainability work.....	12
7.	Proposals for communicating sustainability work.....	14

# 1. Introduction

Sustainability and climate change mitigation are pressing issues of our time. It is true that cultural institutions have a relatively low carbon footprint versus industrial actors or other large polluters. However, unlike those actors, cultural institutions set a powerful example – for their partners, their audience and, depending on their reach, for the wider public. It can be seen as an ethical obligation that an increasing number of cultural institutions want to fulfill. Plus, publicly funded cultural institutions will most likely have to do their part to meet the climate goals of Germany's federal government. There are regulations in progress for federally funded institutions and a similar development is anticipated for institutions funded by the federal states.

The management and team of Lettrétage e.V. are aware of their responsibility and want to establish a firm foundation on which it can, as a cultural institution, make effective decisions in times of climate crisis. The Zentrum für Kulturforschung (EN: Center for Cultural Research) supported Lettrétage in this process.

Our course of action comprised four closely intertwined steps. First, we studied what is done at Lettrétage and how, and used that qualitative information to develop a spreadsheet that illustrated the organization's processes. To get that information, we carried out six guided interviews with employees and evaluated data provided by our client (Lettrétage). Based on these data and closely following the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's guidelines for drafting a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory, we created a spreadsheet that documented and evaluated all the climate-relevant activities of our client. In the next step, we put the results of this inventory into different categories and discussed them with the team in a workshop. Implementation proposals were developed and prioritized in work groups.

Finally, we synthesized the results of the previous steps in the sustainability concept you have in your hands.

# 2. Description of activities

Lettrétage has been curating innovative projects in the literary metropolis of Berlin since 2006. Its focus is on experimenting with new ways of producing and presenting literature. As an anchor institution for Berlin's independent literary scene, Lettrétage is committed to supporting the city's self-employed literary professionals, literary initiatives and independent project promoters. Its aims include preserving the vibrancy and diversity of Berlin's literary scene, absorbing its ideas and providing it with a platform, as well as strengthening its structure by offering free consultations and networking and professional development opportunities for freelance literary professionals.

Building on a previous project, Lettrétage e.V. has been running the "schreiben&leben" project since 2019. The project aims to strengthen the economic basis of Berlin's literary industry as well as the freelance authors, translators, editors and literary event organizers working in it in the long term. The project is centered on free, one-on-one consultations for all types of self-employed literary professionals on a variety of topics related to the economic aspect of their career – including finding a publisher or an agent, applying for stipends, rights and licenses, taxes, contract negotiations and contract law. The annual Branchentreff Literatur event provides a platform for exchange and

professional training opportunities. In addition, schreiben&leben compiles and publishes the monthly Berliner Literaturkalender (EN: “Berlin literary calendar”) and runs the joint online ticketing system for literary events of all event organizers in Berlin as well as a mentoring program for literary curators.

The cultural institution, organized as a non-profit association, makes its spaces accessible to Berlin-based literary professionals for events and other uses, such as editorial meetings, writing groups or translation discussion groups.

Local and (inter)national collaborations are also an important component of the project. Within the context of the EU CROWD project, a network of European literary activists was formed which serves as the groundwork for continued collaborative projects. Lettrétage has other partnerships in North America. Along with its cooperation partners, the team develops and organizes literary projects such as conferences for writers, artistic production workshops and festivals. In order to structure the present study, Lettrétage’s work was examined in the following fields of activity: general administration; event implementation or offering spaces to third parties; consultations; PR work; collaborative projects.

### 3. Environmental impacts

#### 3.1 GHG emissions inventory results

The GHG emissions inventory for our client was generated in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol’s<sup>1</sup> standards, originally developed for industrial enterprises. It is therefore internationally comparable and recognized. As per the standard, the emission types were broken down into the following three scopes:

Scope 1 comprises all *direct* GHG emissions. That includes primary energy sources consumed directly in industry for heating or hot water production (e.g. natural gas, heating oil, gasoline, diesel fuel or coal) and primary energy sources consumed directly by the companies’ vehicles (e.g. gasoline, diesel). Usually this scope includes direct GHG emissions from the production process, such as the cement manufacturing process, as well as direct emissions caused by leaks, e.g. loss of coolant. These types of emissions are not generated in a cultural institution.

Emissions in this scope are generated from heating the ACUD event space (underfloor heating via natural gas condensing boiler) and the Kolonnenstraße office spaces (also via natural gas condensing boiler). Lettrétage’s total Global Warming Potential (GWP) in Scope 1 is 11.756 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

Scope 2 comprises the *indirect* GHG emissions that result from the generation of energy used, e.g. secondary energy sources consumed by the company such as electricity, district heating, steam or refrigeration. At Lettrétage, only emissions from electricity consumption occur in this scope. In order to calculate the GWP – which is to say, the CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents in the inventory – we included emissions from production (i.e. greenhouse gas emissions generated by turning energy sources such as oil or gas into electricity, e.g. by power plant operators) and the upstream supply chain (i.e. greenhouse gas emissions generated in the building of power plants and in the extraction, processing and transport of energy sources, e.g. by an oil refinery).

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-standard>

Lettrétage chiefly uses electricity for office and event equipment at its locations on Kolonnenstraße (office and consultations) and Veteranenstraße (event spaces). We were able to consult the meter readings from the year 2022 for the office location and from the year 2021 for the event location; we estimated the 2022 values of the latter based on the number of event days. The result was 2.228 kg for 2022.

Scope 3 comprises all other indirect GHG emissions resulting from upstream and downstream company activities, in particular from the production of purchased goods and services and their transport, as well as the use of goods, such as electronic devices, office equipment and IT. This yielded a total of 38.503 kg. Here we needed to adjust the inventory structure to reflect the activities of a cultural institution, splitting it into the subcategories 3.1–3.15. We performed a materiality assessment to map out Lettrétage's activities and determine the relevant subcategories in Scope 3 and collected and evaluated data to calculate the emissions from these activities. Since Lettrétage e.V. did not generate a significant amount of emissions from downstream activities, i.e. waste in the broadest sense, we did not include them. The following chart illustrates an overview of the three scopes:

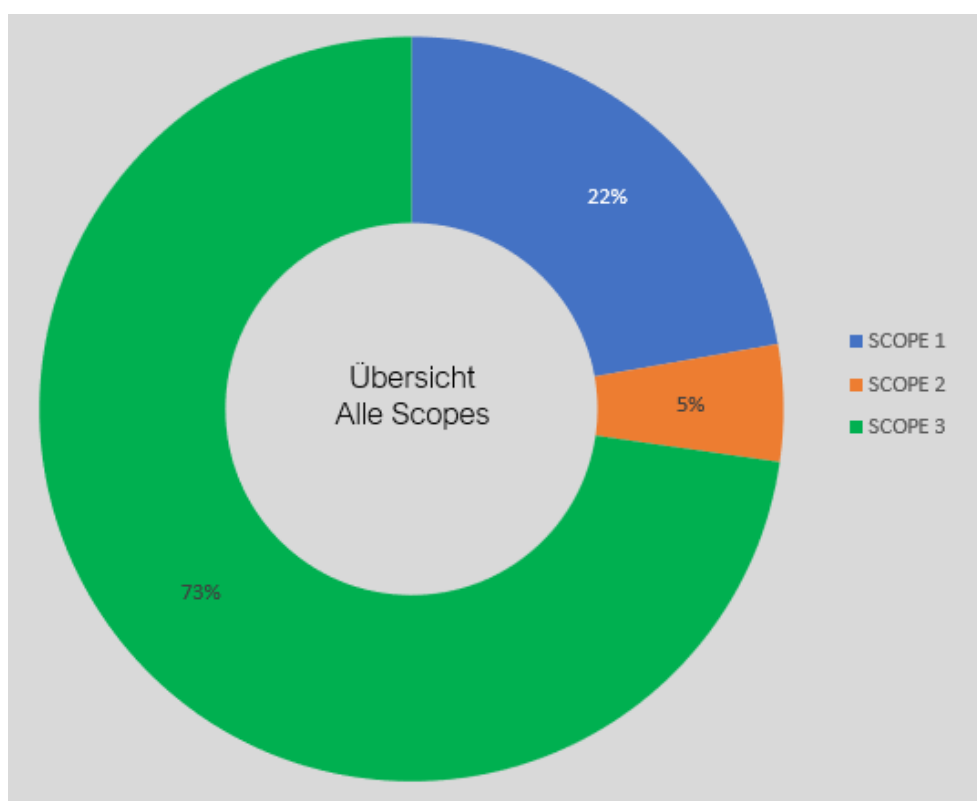


Figure 1: Share of GHG emissions by scope at Lettrétage

Overview: All scopes

Scope 3.1 shows purchased goods and services. It includes IT infrastructure and services, office supplies, the bar, printed matter and project-related livestreams (using “The Poets’ Sounds” as an example). Office supplies were analyzed as a market basket, whereas the bar was analyzed item by item, with varying emission factors by beverage type. In the year 2022, the five activities summarized here yielded a total of 8.170 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

Scope 3.2 describes emissions from the production and transport of capital goods, i.e. acquisitions that are owned and used by the company over numerous reporting periods. According to the protocol, emissions resulting from such acquisitions are calculated in the year they are acquired and not spread out over several years. Since no such acquisitions were made in 2022, the value here is 0. For a first inventory that more closely reflects the actual values, we calculated the average emissions of the preceding five years and applied it here, yielding 1.793 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

Scope 3.4 covers emissions generated from transport and distribution with vehicles of third parties. Applied to the activities of Lettrétage e.V., we registered the trips taken by our guests to and from our locations based on an estimated number of trips and assumptions about the modes of transport as well as of the distance. This area thus yielded 7.179 kg CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

Scope 3.6 illustrates the carbon footprint of business trips. These include employees' work-related trips in modes of transport operated by third parties, not including trips to and from the workplace. For Lettrétage in 2022, this encompassed above all trips that were made for "The Poets' Sounds". Information was available on the number of trips taken, total kilometers traveled, and modes of transport used. Our guests' hotel accommodations were also included in the analysis. Based on these data, this scope yielded a GHG impact or carbon footprint of 19.671 kg.

In Scope 3.7, we also analyzed Lettrétage employees' trips to and from work, based on available data on distances, modes of transport and the average number of trips. These calculations yielded 1.690 kg CO2 equivalents. The following figure shows the respective GHG shares of the five categories analyzed in Scope 3:

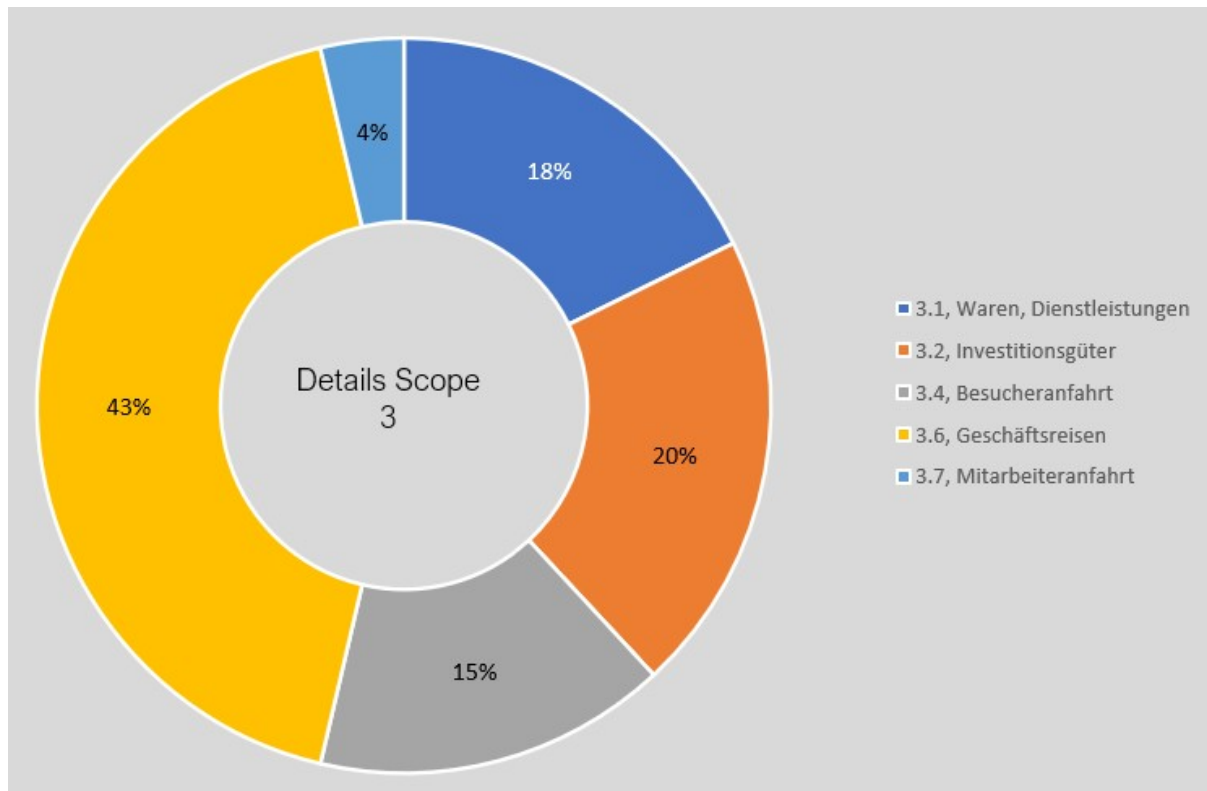


Figure 2: Overview of the GHG shares of Scope 3 categories relevant to Lettrétage

3.1 Goods, services

3.2 Capital goods

3.4 Trips made by guests

3.5 Business trips

3.7 Employees' trips to and from work

In order to depict Lettrétage's regular operations beyond international projects, which involve a great amount of travel, in the following figure we omitted the emissions produced by "The Poets' Sounds" in 2022. By doing so, it gives a more realistic idea of how the regular operations of Lettrétage e.V. perform in the GHG emissions inventory.

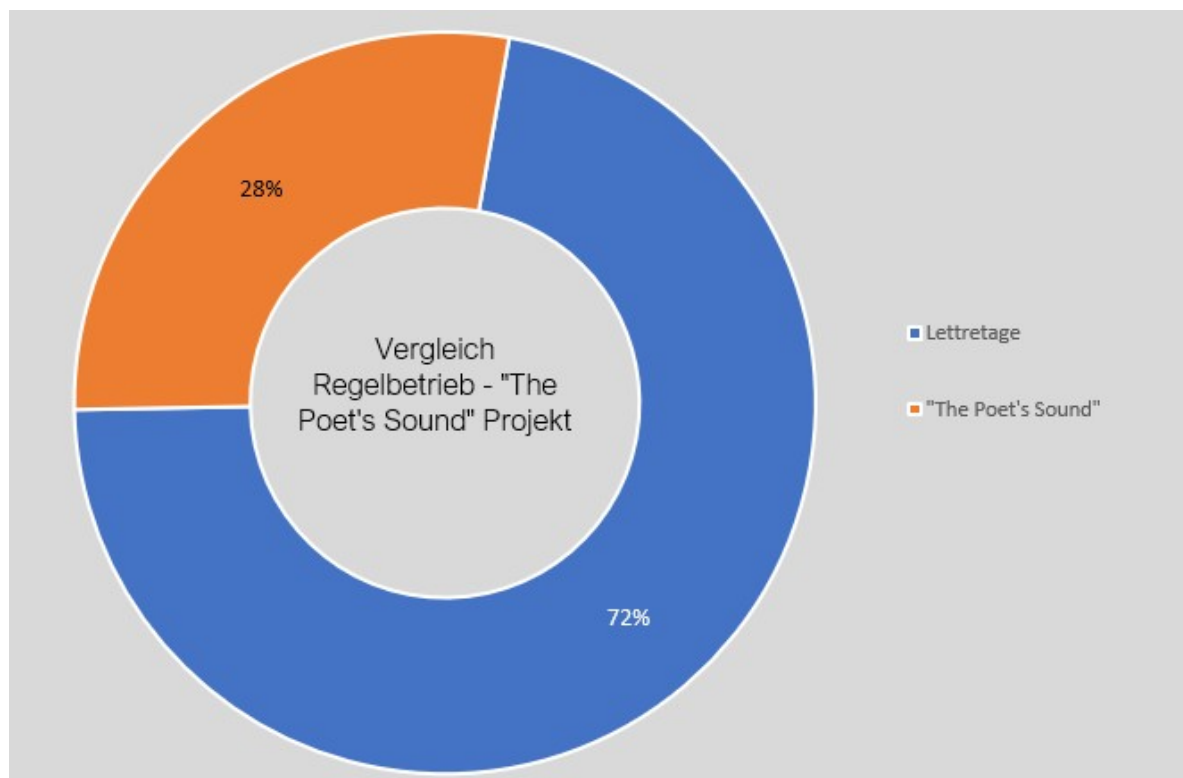


Figure 3: The GHG share of regular operations proportional to project work (based on the example of "The Poets' Sounds")

Comparison: Regular operations – "The Poets' Sounds" project

## 3.2 Summary of the big points

As these charts show: most emissions occur in Scope 3, comprising 73% of the total emissions in the year 2022. That is completely normal for a cultural institution given that there is no energy-intensive production of goods. The largest GHG impact – of almost 20 metric tons – is generated mostly by the project-related trips depicted in Scope 3.6. Despite our client's best efforts to prevent air travel, many flights were taken. That is partly due to time constraints and partly to the preferences of the traveling artists and their schedules. For rehearsals and performances, air travel is the preferred option in many cases due to shorter travel times. Unfortunately, airfare is also usually still cheaper than train tickets. However, even if more expensive than flights, trips taken by train are refundable in accordance with Germany's Bundesreisekostengesetz (BRKG), or Federal Travel Expenses Act (see section 4 of the BRKG; subsection 4.1.2 of the administrative directive of the BRKG).

With 11.8 metric tons, representing 23% of the total emissions, Scope 1 has the second-highest share. However, our client's own decisions and process changes can only have a limited impact on the emissions generated by heating. If we remove the projects from the year's calculations and only consider regular operations, this influence is even stronger, with 31% of emissions stemming from heat production.



A rather high overall impact can be seen in the area of capital goods (3.2) if we consider the acquisitions made in the past five years pro rata for the year 2022. This category is closely followed by the category of purchased goods and services (3.1). The bar stands out in this category, in particular the beer produced in Southern Germany, since it makes up a large portion of the inventory.

Trips made by guests (3.4), totaling 7.2 metric tons of emissions, also make up a large share. In this case we can safely assume that guests get to the event space via public transit, by bike or on foot because there is hardly any parking nearby. In that respect, little can be optimized here – on the contrary, the better a cultural institution does its work, the higher its carbon footprint will be. Taking a step back and analyzing the bigger picture, one could pose the question of what the guests would otherwise do with their time and money. This question is similar to the one posed in Chapter 6 about the structural influence a cultural institution can have with regard to socioecological transformation.

## 4. Recommendations

Based on the results of the inventory, our communication with the Lettrétage e.V. team and the latest in climate change mitigation and resource conservation, we can give our client several recommendations for implementing sustainability. We then summarize additional recommendations either because they make a strong impact or are generally easy to implement, i.e. they do not require any in-depth consideration of constraints.

### 4.1 Recommendations for regular operations (not including projects)

- Heat production (for heating and warm water): Representing approx. 31% (11.7 metric tons) of the total emissions of regular operations, the measures implemented here will have the greatest impact. The following measures are the most effective for renters:
  - Insulation: Fitting windows and doors with insulation tape can save 10–20%, i.e. 1–2 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.
  - Controlled ventilation: Remove all objects from windowsills so windows can be fully opened to ventilate and easily closed again a few minutes later.
  - In principle, lowering the room temperature is also effective – each degree lower is a 6% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> – but it seems to us that this option has been fully exhausted.
- Electricity (refrigeration, event equipment, office equipment): The greatest impact would be achieved if the landlords of the office and event spaces would switch to a renewable energy provider. Doing so would bring this section – at least in the inventory – from 2.2 metric tons down to 0. If that is not possible, there is still the option of being mindful about using office equipment and reducing the number of devices in use. At the moment, the five printers have a lot of electricity consumption potential depending on the amount of use. The number of devices used in an office space could be reduced.
- Beverage assortment in the bar: The biggest individual item here is the transport of beer from Southern Germany. For the amounts specified, this adds up to half a metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub>. Replacing it with a locally brewed brand would bring about a 0.5 metric ton reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>.

- Printing: Another 0.5 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> can be reduced by switching to climate-neutral printing.
- Web hosting: Switching to a climate-neutral web hosting service provider would lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by another approx. 0.5 metric tons.
- Purchasing devices and event equipment second-hand prevents 50–100 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per device. Possible supply sources: [www.backmarket.de](http://www.backmarket.de), [rebeam-shop.com](http://rebeam-shop.com). As regards smartphones: Get a smartphone-as-a-service with fairphone and environmental rates and sustainable smartphones via everphone.

## 4.2 Recommendations for projects:

In the projects area, emissions are primarily generated by travel-related activities. Hence, we recommend the following:

- For offsetting travel:

<https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/umwelttipps-fuer-den-alltag/uebergreifendetipps/kompensation-von-treibhausgasemissionen#unsere-tipps>

[https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/376/publikationen/ratgeber\\_freiwillige\\_co2\\_kompensation\\_final\\_internet.pdf](https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/376/publikationen/ratgeber_freiwillige_co2_kompensation_final_internet.pdf)

We recommend using certified websites such as the ones listed above. Offsetting only helps keep emissions from increasing and eventually reach 0 in the inventory of the project. A reduction cannot be achieved solely with offset payments. Nor can they be subsidized according to the Federal Travel Expenses Act.

- Reduce travel. Avoiding travel, especially air travel, goes a step further and gives the work another direction. Stays can be extended in order to get the most out of a trip.
- Develop guidelines for collaborations with defined (minimum) standards and implement them accordingly. For example, air travel can be ruled out in advance and trip planning and booking can be carried out in a way that is less harmful to the environment.

## 4.3 Additional recommendations

- Additional improvements to the inventory and progress in implementing sustainability can be aspired to in the following ways:
- Get an energy consultation (in coordination with the landlord)  
<https://www.berlin.de/energieeffiziente-unternehmen/>
- Provide information on public transport, including a CO<sub>2</sub> calculator for the journey, on the project's website
- Optimize website's energy use and pass this knowledge along in consultations  
<https://visitmy.website/2020/07/13/this-website-is-killing-the-planet/>
- Only hold video calls via cable connection and inform people of electricity consumption
- In consultations, point out options for environmentally friendly production (environmentally friendly printing, rental portals, second-hand technology, etc.)

## 5. Operational goals and planned measures

Part of our assignment was to prepare and conduct a workshop with the entire Lettrétage team in order to present the study, make suggestions, and define goals and measures for different work areas as a group. For this workshop, the team was split up into four groups that drafted proposals for measures in their respective work area. We synthesized the results and are presenting a summary of them here:

### 5.1 Events

The plan for the bar is to switch to local products and have the clientele participate in the process. Surveys and tastings will be carried out in order to get patrons' opinions and also to explain the story behind the change. If a beverage with relatively long transport distances stays in the assortment temporarily, a higher price can be charged to offset consumption. It is important to bear in mind during this transition that the bar financially supports the cultural institution.

As far as the technical equipment goes, introducing an opt-in procedure is planned: for example, projections should only be made available if a user specifically requests them. Using fewer basic energy-consuming devices, such as wired microphones, should (once again) become standard. In relation to setting up livestreams, which are very popular among event organizers, awareness of their energy consumption should be raised.

### 5.2 Public relations

The PR team is planning to establish upload guidelines for the entire team to specify which data should be saved in the cloud and what needs to be taken into account in order to effectively reduce this form of hidden energy consumption. Existing uploads should also be reviewed to determine whether they are necessary. The web homepage host should be reviewed in terms of its energy consumption and, if necessary, replaced.

The need for the printed monthly program should be evaluated in consultation with the partner institutions. Are copies of it put out on display and, more importantly, are they actually picked up? This will help determine whether display locations should be changed and whether the print run can be reduced. The use of the Berliner Literaturkalender should also be reviewed in order to reduce the print run if necessary.

### 5.3 Consultations and projects

In this area, the team is planning to get better acquainted with the (new and/or existing) legal basis for sustainability-oriented procurement processes, among other things, in order to support the introduction of new and more environmentally friendly standards. For example, they are planning on including offset payments for unavoidable excess consumption in budget plans and funding applications so that financing institutions themselves must actively remove them if necessary.

The annual Branchentreff event should be more consistently sustainable as a whole. For example, by avoiding packaging waste, using organic regional catering, providing reusable materials or lending them if necessary, offering WIFI to all participants, and so on. Questions regarding ecological standards should be addressed with partners and sponsors early on, especially in the context of

international projects, in order to take advantage of opportunities to learn from one another. In the case of projects with many partners, participants should define sustainability standards at the outset and decide on their implementation, if necessary, with the help of a sustainability consultant. In order to create incentives to avoid air travel, the team is reviewing whether higher fees can be paid for longer travel times.

In the service provider database that is being created in the upcoming schreiben&lebenPLUS project, environmental aspects have a special designation. Project consultants will get additional training in incorporating sustainability-related aspects into their consultations no matter what the specific topic. Consultation settings should also be standardized and video chats via online networks avoided whenever possible. The aim is to expand the range of consultations to include such topics in the future.

Lettrétage, as a partner of the CROWD network of European literary organizations, wants to introduce a proposal to the network that would prioritize the development of sustainability standard. The idea is to plan, within the framework of the next Creative Europe project, training workshops on the topic that would be accessible to literary professionals in the respective country beyond the partner organizations.

## 6. Structures for anchoring sustainability work

In order to improve Lettrétage's carbon footprint and promote sustainability, a strategic course of action is necessary. Some changes can be made relatively quickly, others require more planning and have an impact on other areas that need to be considered as well. In some places, communication with third parties is critical to success, which requires a well-coordinated and ongoing process.

### **Delegating a member of the management**

To ensure successful sustainability management, we recommend assigning the task to a member of the management team. In doing so, goals can be achieved; resources, especially working hours, can be scheduled for the ongoing process; and the processes and results can be integrated into operations management.

### **Operational implementation**

Optimizations involving Lettrétage's equipment or infrastructure (reducing the number of printers, insulating windows, etc.) should be initiated by the management team member in charge. Before Lettrétage e.V. declares its shared understanding of sustainability as a goal across the board, corresponding measures should meet with acceptance and support. Naturally, it is important to consider the extent to which workflows or the workplace will be affected by such interventions. In any case, it is advisable to inform all employees in advance and to listen to and consider their opinions.

### **Strategic implementation**

As the workshop conducted for this assignment showed, in addition to these operational steps, a strategic approach should be implemented on three levels: in the areas of PR, projects and events. We found long-term strategic potential for more sustainability in operations in these areas. The

focus here is mostly on the structure of processes rather than the optimization of facilities or technical equipment. In that respect, implementing sustainability in these three areas represents a long-term task which also requires collaboration with third parties and the different groups of stakeholders. We therefore recommend holding – in addition to the previous work meetings – a quarterly conference between the management team and representatives of these three work areas. These meetings should be used to set goals, determine the project implementation status, deal with problems and document the qualitative results of the efforts.

### **Documentation and impact assessment**

In general, we recommend conducting the GHG emissions inventory on an annual basis. In the first step, it helped give direction to possible interventions in sustainability. The first inventory makes clear where significant reductions of GHG emissions can be made. By continuing to conduct the inventory, it is possible to monitor whether the desired improvements are being achieved.

The inventory was provided as an Excel workbook that not only presents the results but also contains the compiled activity data, factors for calculating GHG emissions and all the sources used. To facilitate continuity and enable our client's independence, we have provided an input file with which they can continue to conduct the inventory after a short training.

To continue conducting the inventory and determining the GHG emissions savings achieved, the following steps must be carried out:

- Activity data must be routinely documented in order to determine the GHG impacts in the different scopes
- Data must be entered into the spreadsheets and the applied emissions factors reviewed
- If necessary, new activities should be added to the emissions inventory

The documenting of activity data must be done in the individual work areas. Each work area should delegate someone to be in charge. Emissions-relevant activities that cannot be easily assigned to a work area or for which the data are not readily available will be documented by the management team. We recommend a central authority to be in charge of the input file. We also recommend that it be the management team.

## 7. Proposals for communicating sustainability work

The industrial enterprises for which the GHG emissions inventory was originally developed wanted to use it above all to identify opportunities for reducing emissions. There are other options available to cultural organizations: they are engaged in dialogue with various target groups about values and symbolic meanings. Cultural institutions can thus directly address social issues at the heart of a socio-ecological transformation: the image of the good life, responsibility, global justice.

As the inventory and recommendations show, the cultural sector can only make small contributions to CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. Its decisive potential for contributing to sustainable development lies in being an exemplary model for sustainable structures and processes, enabling participation in introducing them, and spreading knowledge and experiences acquired in the process. Therefore, communication plays a key role.

Lettrétage e.V. takes the structure of its sustainability communication concept from its communication concept. The concept emphasizes Lettrétage's understanding of itself as a learning organization and the desire to set an example without being patronizing. So, in terms of sustainability work, Lettrétage's PR department sees its task in communicating the implementation process. It wants to do its part to initiate and support similar processes in the independent and institutional literary scenes. Based on these principles and on the workshop results, we were able to formulate the following guiding ideas for sustainability communication:

### **Establish regular communication on the topic of sustainability**

Lettrétage e.V. plans on publishing articles on all its platforms that report on the implementation process and explain the sustainability goals behind the changes. These articles can also contain helpful factual information and additional sources of knowledge.

### **Set an example without being annoying**

With this style of communication, Lettrétage will be publicizing its own implementation process in the spirit of a "learning institution", inviting the participation of its followers and the general public, highlighting the issues and challenges that emerge and addressing any mistakes made along the way. The idea is not to create distance from third parties, but rather to encourage shared learning experiences.

### **Engage stakeholders in communication**

Lettrétage and its partners should introduce the upcoming changes together. For example, in the case of swapping out the current bar assortment with regional beverages, we recommend asking patrons which regional beers they prefer. That way target groups get involved in the process, which both solidifies acceptance of the change and increases their awareness of the issue.