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MINEV

Making a film festival greener!

Thessaloniki Film Festival's
Green Team

greenteam@filmfestival.gr

Date | Location

Thessaloniki Film Festival

TFF is the largest film institution in Greece, which offers quality cinema and cinematic events all year round

Thessaloniki International Film Festival (November)

Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival (March)

Evia Film Project (July)

Thessaloniki Cinema Museum

Cinémathèque

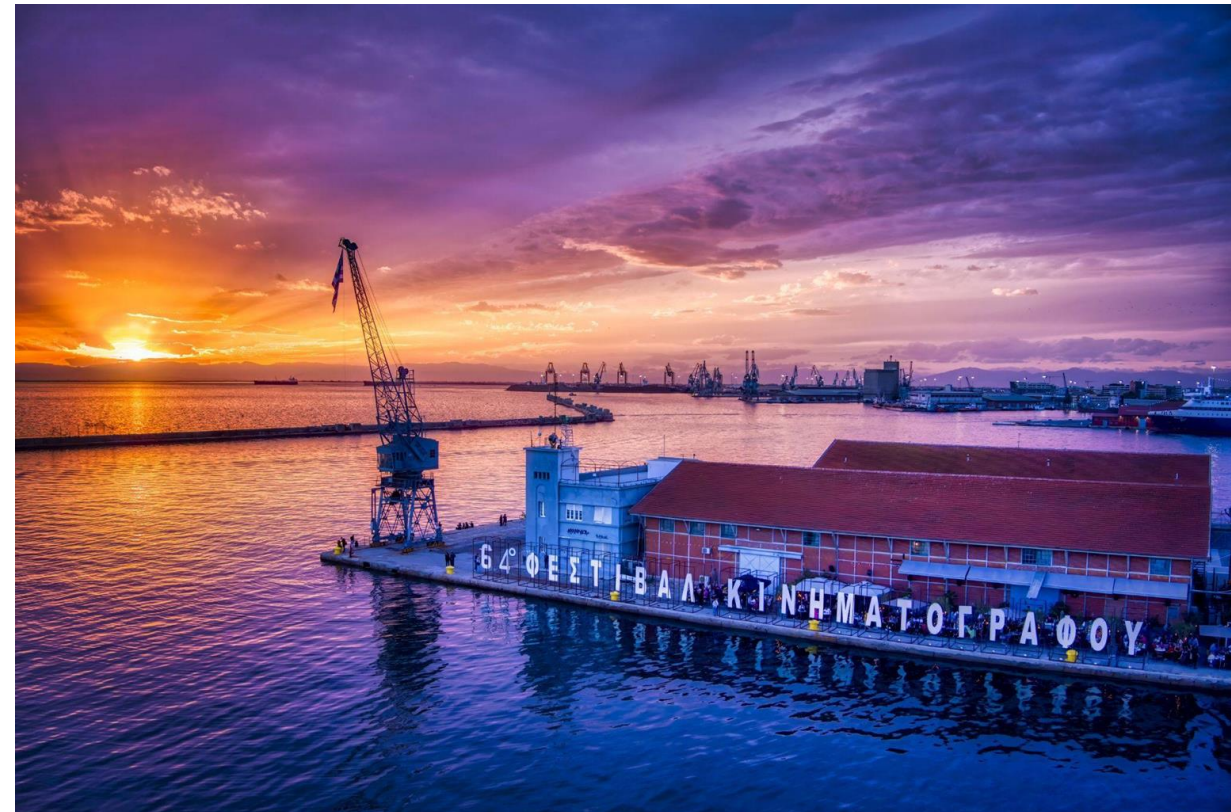
Educational Programs

Masterclasses

Four arthouse theatres

Two bars

Open air screenings



Our environmental policy

As global citizens, we have become increasingly aware of how important it is for every one of us to do our part to protect the environment and our fellow human beings affected by the climate crisis. The Thessaloniki Film Festival acknowledges its share of the responsibility and commits to becoming as green and sustainable as possible, by reconsidering its overall cultural mission, working methods and daily operations through an ecological lens.

We view the climate crisis as primarily a cultural challenge, which requires profound societal transformation. For decades, TFF has offered compelling stories of humanity, from around the world, and provided a space for critical conversations about urgent social issues for filmmakers and audiences alike. Now we also wish to demonstrate, through our own best practices, how the arts and culture can assume a leading role in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation; and to enhance and enrich our positive impact on our audiences and the wider community we serve.

TFF's environmental policy is being detailed and systematized into an action plan, meant to constitute an integral part of our administration, daily operations and overall organizational culture. The action plan will be regularly revised and re-evaluated and will continue to reflect and support our environmental ambition over the coming years.

Underwritten by the organization's Board of Directors, the policy constitutes our commitment to join global efforts towards a sustainable future, support the goals of the Paris Agreement and of the EU Green Deal, contribute to Thessaloniki's role in the "EU mission: 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities", and comply with Greek environmental legislation and the country's climate targets.

Environmental policy in action

The Thessaloniki Film Festival had since 2021 expressed its intention to adopt and implement good environmental management policies and practices, both in the Organization's daily operations and in its overall programming and individual artistic actions. Starting with the 1st Evia Film Project in the summer of 2022, this intention began to be translated into specific actions, developed during its major festival events as well as during its continuous annual activity.

We quickly realized that policy formulation for all TFF's activities requires specialized consulting services. Thus, in March 2023, the Festival assigned to an expert consultant on sustainable cultural management the task of designing the Organization's environmental policy, strategy and action plan and their effective implementation.



Environmental policy in action

The buildings that host the Organizations' headquarters, the festivals and our Agora events as well as our theatres, are built in the early and mid 20th century and in their majority are declared as city landmarks, something which gives us limited possibilities of interventions.

Given that the energy consumption in the buildings is largely responsible for the Festival's carbon footprint, TFF has commissioned a carbon footprint analysis and energy audit of its venues and operations (throughout the year and during the festival events) to the Process Equipment Design Laboratory (PEDL) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The study will be accompanied by proposals for specific actions and interventions which will lead to a reduction in consumption, pollutant emissions and the footprint of the Festival. It will also affect TFF's environmental strategy and action plan and will provide the basis for environmental certifications according to international standards.

Through this process, the organization is now systematizing the collection and analysis of relevant data, i.e. energy and water consumption, waste management, procurement of services/food/materials, travel and transportation etc.

The study is underway, while its results and recommendations will be submitted to TFF and presented in 2024.

Environmental policy in action

Green Charter for Film Festivals

TFF is a co-signatory of the **Green Charter for Film Festivals**, a European initiative of the Festival Network MIOB. By registering, festivals commit to “follow a progression path to lower the pollution generated by our activities and be in a constructive attitude towards our environment”.

The Charter includes a carbon assessment tool, where general data and data on energy, transportation, food and waste are submitted and measured for each festival event, making it possible to compare environmental performance over time.

All the data for the 63rd and 64th Thessaloniki International Film Festivals (November 2022 and 2023 respectively) have already been submitted, as well as the data for the 25th Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival/March 2023, while the relevant information from the recent 26th Documentary Festival/March 2024 are currently being collected.

(<https://greencharterforfilmfestivals.org/up/CharterGCFFF.pdf>)



Setting up the Festival's Green Team and training procedures

- ❖ TFF's environmental policy is overseen by the General Director.
- ❖ Since spring 2023, the Festival employs the services of an expert consultant on sustainable cultural management.
- ❖ A Festival executive has been assigned the role of Green Officer/Coordinator.
- ❖ A Green Team was formed, with the participation of staff members from across the organization – administrative, technical and creative areas as well as external collaborators (the team can be reached via greenteam@filmfestival.gr).
- ❖ Three introductory training seminars have been held for all employees and partners, as well as for festival volunteers.
- ❖ A series of individual advisory-educational workshops (thematic seminars) with the Green Team, employees and partners involved in specific parameters of the program are currently taking place, on the following subjects: policy-strategy, legal & ethical issues in regards to environmental sustainability and sustainable management, energy & water management, materials & waste management, procurement, digital footprint & digital sobriety, travel & offsetting, communication & outreach). The seminars will also be open to all staff.



Setting up the Festival's Green Team and training procedures

- ❖ Further access to relevant training material, good practice guides, case studies from the cultural sector internationally will be provided, while regular updates about climate issues and innovations in sustainability will be shared among staff members.
- ❖ Special emphasis will be placed on training and compliance with the general framework of the Green Deal and individual policies, e.g. EU: Green Procurement, Greening Creative Europe, as well as on carbon offsetting frameworks and best practices to avoid greenwashing.
- ❖ TFF's environmental policy aims at a horizontal application of sustainable thinking and practice in all decision-making processes of the Festival, in the course of the next three years. We will gradually revise internal procedures, update work protocols and re-evaluate priorities – based on the carbon footprint study and the recommendations report, and in consultation with staff and the Green Team. In order to achieve this change of mentality, one of TFF's priorities is to cultivate and develop green skills among staff and collaborators, embed sustainable clauses in the job descriptions and roles of employees, as well as in the contracts of external partners.



Objectives

- Support the goals of the Paris Agreement and of the EU Green Deal, contribute to Thessaloniki's role in the "EU mission: 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities", and comply with Greek environmental legislation and the country's climate targets.
- Implement sustainable practices and horizontally enforce the sustainability principles to all decision-making processes of the Festival.
- Raise awareness and develop skills among the Festival staff in terms of green practices.
- Inform and motivate the audience and the guests to embrace environmental practices even beyond the scope of the Festival.
- Calculate the Festival's carbon footprint, while measuring the energy efficiency of its buildings' infrastructure.
- Systematize the collection, measuring, monitoring and comparison of useful data (energy, water, volume of waste, transports) with the aim of drawing conclusions and improving the environmental performance of the Festival.
- Gradually reduce its impact on the environment to the minimum and operate with respect to the environment and the people, in compliance with the Green Charter signed by the Festival



Timescale

TFF's environmental policy is being detailed and systematized into an action plan and aims at a horizontal application of sustainable thinking and practice in all decision-making processes of the Festival, in the course of the next three years.

The action plan will be regularly revised and re-evaluated and will continue to reflect and support our environmental ambition over the coming years, as we will strive to achieve our goals: understand and minimize our environmental impacts, implement new policies and modes of work across our activities and operations, reduce the organization's carbon footprint.

Our goal, environmentally-wise, is always setting higher standards.



The buildings

As mentioned before, the carbon footprint analysis and energy audit are underway, with results and recommendations expected in 2024. The study involves the Festival's buildings and the annual daily operations of the organization, as well as the annual festival events (TIFF & TiDF) and the two Market / AGORA's Events. It will highlight the issues that need to be addressed as a priority and will enable interventions that will reduce energy consumption and energy costs and serve as the baseline for tracking the progress of our action plan.



The buildings *Olympion, our flagship*

Energy upgrade works were completed in June 2022 at OLYMPION, the Festival's permanent headquarters, improving the building's energy rating from energy class D to class B. The replacement of both the old cooling - heating equipment of the building and the lighting units of the two cinema venues, "Olympion" theatre (ground floor, 676 seats) and "Pavlos Zannas" theater (5th floor, 192 seats), has led to increased energy efficiency and financial savings.

In addition, the renovation of the bar "The Green Room" (1st floor, Olympion) and of the workplace of the audiovisual technicians (4th floor) was completed in 2022 and in 2023 respectively.



The buildings *Warehouse C and Cinema Museum at the Port*

A study for the renovation of Warehouse C (the Festival and AGORA Center during the events), that was carried out shortly before the pandemic period and requires updating, includes the energy upgrade of the building. Our medium-term planning includes the complete renovation of the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum. The architectural study is already being prepared along with the electromechanical study in the direction of energy upgrade. Both buildings are declared as city landmarks and are located at the Port of Thessaloniki.



The buildings *Projects and funding*

In general, further energy upgrading interventions are planned for the immediate future, once the energy efficiency audit is completed – for the OLYMPION, Warehouse C, the Cinema Museum, as well as for other venues managed by the Festival.

The implementation of these projects is a priority for the Festival, provided of course that the necessary funding is secured on a case-by-case basis.



The buildings *Ameliorating our daily operations*

Other green initiatives regarding the daily operations, include: gradual replacement of all incandescent lighting to LEDs, exclusive use of rechargeable batteries, replacement of all workstations from desktop to laptop, upgrade of projection systems shortly before the pandemic period, reduction of paper consumption, systematic reuse of office materials/equipment/furniture, etc., digitalization of administration procedures.

Behavioural measures are also implemented: after working hours all electronic devices are turned off (vs stand-by mode), digital documents preferred over printed ones, online meetings over in-person meetings, when appropriate etc.



Materials and procurement

- ❑ We will be revising our procurement policy, aiming at a more sustainable supply chain. We want to better understand what we procure and to involve and support our partners and suppliers in our green transition. We will strive to reduce the negative impacts of our daily operations in terms of the use of resources, by reconsidering the way we work and the choices we make.
- ❑ We have already taken measures in order to reduce the demand for plastic water bottles: reusable cups and water bottles are available to purchase at our venues, and water fountains/coolers have been installed in public and office areas (the Festival has carried out laboratory analyses of the water supplied in different buildings through the grid).
- ❑ Our offices both in Athens and Thessaloniki have fully equipped kitchens, so as to avoid food & beverage deliveries, plastic packaging and single-use plastics, such as cups and plates.
- ❑ The repair of equipment is favoured over buying new; durability and sustainability are always taken into account, when procuring equipment and office materials.



Materials and procurement

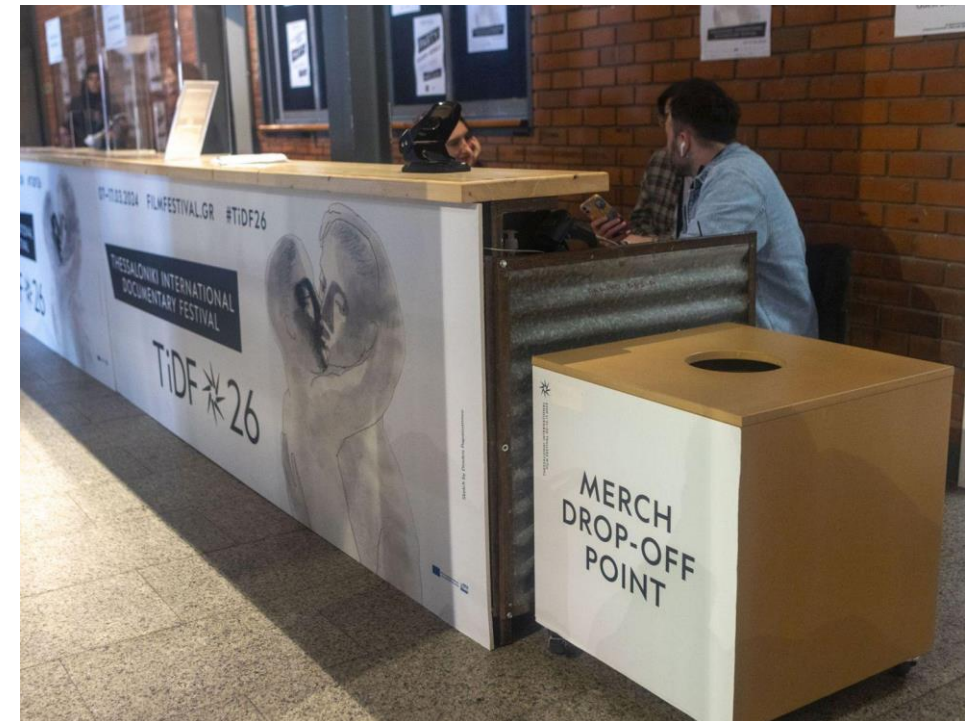
- ❑ We have minimized the number of pages and reduced radically the print-run of our official catalogues. Additional information is available to guests through our website and the ThessFest App.
- ❑ Many of the Festival's publications are printed on FSC certified paper, while the majority of tickets are issued via an electronic ticketing system.
- ❑ Our goal for 2024 is for all contracts (staff, partners, suppliers) to be digitally signed, to avoid the unnecessary use of paper.
- ❑ The banners and posters of each edition are turned to handmade bags which are collective and extremely popular.



Waste management

We have already taken many steps towards diverting as much waste as possible from landfill, by working with experts and constantly learning how to identify the different waste streams and optimize our waste management system. During the festival events, TFF collaborates with specialized companies to secure daily collection, sorting, and circular management of the waste generated, with separate recycling bins for the different waste streams, so that materials can be weighed, recycled, composted, or gain a second life.

- ❑ Recycling bins in the offices and Festival venues are clearly marked and easily accessible. As far as paper, electrical and electronic materials, we collaborate with the waste management services of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, while for batteries we work with a specialized private company.
- ❑ A "Merch drop-off" point operates at Warehouse C, Festival's and Agora's Centre, to promote reuse of information materials during the events.



Waste management

Our partners

- During the TIFF and the TiDF we collaborate with the following companies, which deliver, after the end of each event, relevant reports and certificates:

- VIPA GREECE S.A. for the collection and management of waste generated across the high traffic Festival venues: plastic, paper, glass, aluminum, organics, other, for case-by-case recycling or for biogas production.

- TFF has also commissioned to VIPA a carbon footprint report for the annual Festivals and industry events. The report for the 63rd Thessaloniki International Film Festival / November 2022 was delivered, the report for the 64th Festival / November 2023 is underway and will be followed by the one for the 26th Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival / March 2024.



Waste management

Our partners

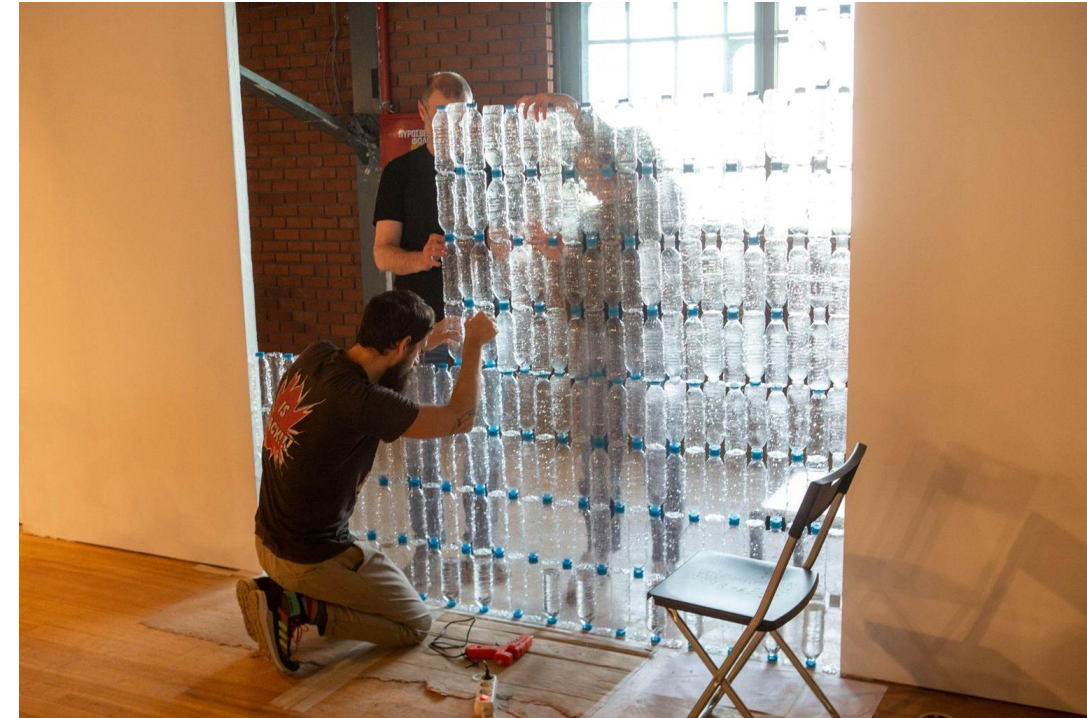
- InCommon (Innovative Communities Onwards), a civil non-profit company, for the collection and management of produced coffee waste from the 6 canteens of the Festival (coffee residues do not end up in the landfill, but are used for the production of bioenergy) and the produced food waste from the Agora lunches (composting).
- Cigaret Cycle, a civil non-profit company, for the collection and management of cigarettes (18 bins for the collection of cigarette butts). Cigarette butts do not end up in the landfill and the sea but are turned into fertilizer or raw material of industrial plastic. We also work with Cigaret Cycle during the Evia Film Project and throughout the year.
- For the collection and management of municipal waste in Evia, we cooperate with other local companies.
 - Guests and audiences receive advice and are urged to consider sustainable water consumption, avoid single-use plastics, make more sustainable food and beverage choices and are kindly asked to help the Festival's waste management policy.



Waste management

Results achieved & Examples

- ★ Based on VIPA's data, the use of water coolers appears to have contributed to the reduction of single-use plastics. In particular, at the 63rd TIFF (November 2022) 70 kg of PET was collected, whereas the 25th TiDF (March 2023) and the 64th TiFF (November 2023) were marked by a reduction to 40 kg and 30 kg, respectively.
- ★ We have already received InCommon's reports on four festivals, which show that the training of partners, guests, audience progress contributes to more systematic and effective sorting at source. Specifically, in November 2023, 665 kg of CO₂ were saved, 165 kg of organic waste did not end up in the landfill and 21 people were trained in sustainable practices. In March, the respective numbers were 713,3 kg of CO₂, 175 kg of organic waste, and 31 trainees, numbers that signal an upward trend.



Waste management

Results achieved & Examples

- ★ Cigaret Cycle's reports also seem to indicate that the longer the program continues and people become aware and are informed, the better the results are. In November 2022, 70.800 cigarette butts had been collected, while in November 2023 a total of 102.500 cigarette butts were collected and recycled, 718 m3 of sweet/salt water were saved from pollution, 656 kg of CO2 were not released in the environment, 15.980 MJ of non-renewable energy, otherwise channeled to the production of materials, were saved.



Travel and Hospitality

Taking into account the geographical location of the Festival and the limited opportunities for more sustainable travel choices, TFF, based on the principle of the European cultural programs for fair, greener and inclusive mobility, is pursuing a greener travel policy, without undermining the artistic and social dimension of the festival events and the Markets.

- Guests are encouraged to opt for the greenest travel options, when available. Whenever possible the Guest Office collaborates with other Festivals to coordinate and minimize air travel of guests, while encouraging train travel and shared car rides.
- For all travel/flights deemed absolutely necessary, the Festival is considering its participation in carbon offsetting programs. TIFF is following closely the sustainability initiatives of its official air carrier, Aegean Airlines (e.g. 15-20% less fuel consumption, 19-23% less CO2 per seat) and advocates for bolder and more effective initiatives.
- At the recent, 26th Thessaloniki International Documentary Festival/March 2024, we managed for the first time to use a significant number of electric or hybrid cars, through the relevant sponsorship.



Travel and Hospitality

- Employees are encouraged to use public transportation, instead of using their cars; business travel, especially by air, is strictly monitored.
- During the year, mainly for transportation within Athens and Thessaloniki, low-emission leasing cars are used, while we are in discussions with a company for the use of a sponsored electric car in Thessaloniki.
- Given the restrictions arising from the regulations on public tenders and contracts, efforts are being made to partner with hotel units that hold a recognized “green” certification.
- Meals offered to guests of the Festivals and Markets are largely vegetarian and vegan, local and seasonal, while disposable plates and utensils are avoided. The Festival collaborates with restaurants prioritizing the local cuisine and promoting local producers, and partners with winemakers from the region for its sponsored events.



Special events

The Evia Film Project

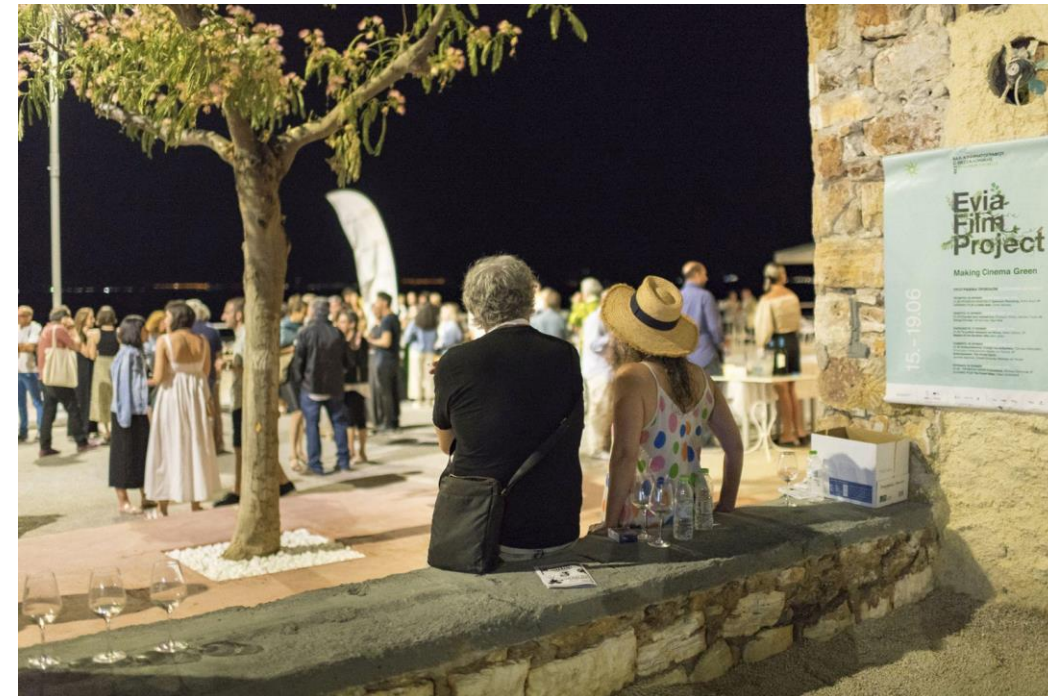
The TFF's new initiative, the Evia Film Project, is an innovative developmental environment - oriented program, aiming to culturally resuscitate Evia and render it a global - scale hub for "Green Cinema", showcasing films and projects in progress, masterclasses, workshops, pioneering educational programs, and fostering the interconnection between film directors and audiovisual professionals from the four corners of the world. This year, the linchpin between the films and the actions of Evia Film Project is no other than water: the sea, the rain, all water resources, and their life - defining relation with mankind.



Special events

The Evia Film Project: Making Cinema Green

An extension of Agora's influential activity, this new leg of the TFF aims to function as a cinema think tank, in order to highlight and promote film projects meant to raise awareness of the calamitous effects of environmental destruction and climate change. The Evia Film Project is serving as a springboard for the rebirth of a desolate and traumatized region, triggering the restart of local society on both a symbolic and a practical level.



Collaborations: Teaming up with valuable allies

In addition to the collaborations already mentioned, we will strive to communicate our green initiatives and share knowledge with our audiences, guests and partners and the wider community we serve. We also wish to exchange ideas and work together with the cultural sector in Greece and abroad, aiming at learning from each other and offering mutual support in navigating the challenges of the ecological transition.

TFF communicates its environmental policy to the public and private entities with which the Festival often collaborates with in co-hosting selected events. This way we encourage them to adopt similar practices and become active partners in the common effort for a greener and more sustainable future.

Starting with the 64rd TIFF (November 2023) and in order to share and support the commitments of its environmental policy, the Festival established a 10-euro “green fee” for accredited guests and pledged to reinvest the collected amount towards its sustainability action plan. The initiative was warmly embraced by accredited guests and all relevant information has been publicly shared.

- TFF is part of the SMART7 Festival Network which organizes focused training sessions and know-how exchange for their employees. A Sustainability Workshop is scheduled for 2024, where we will share our experiences and good practice with our colleagues from SMART7 and other European festivals.

Challenges

Our main challenge is funding the resources for continuing the program, implementing the new green strategies and expand the energy upgrading interventions for venues managed by the Festival.

Another challenge is forming a greener travel policy, given the geographical location of the Festival and the limited opportunities for more sustainable travel choices, without at the same time undermining the artistic and social dimension of the festival events and the Markets, based on the principle of the European cultural programs for fair, greener and inclusive mobility.

Given the restrictions arising from the regulations on public tenders and contracts, another challenge is partnering with hotel units that have a recognized “green” certification and with printing companies that can secure recycled or certified paper etc.

We work hard towards communicating our green initiatives and sharing learning with our audiences, guests and partners and the wider community we serve. And most importantly to communicating the need for ditching single-use plastic water bottles and plastic in general, given the current market potential.

“Climate change is real. It is happening right now, it is the most urgent threat facing our entire species and we need to work collectively together and stop procrastinating”

*Leonardo di Caprio in his acceptance speech for Best Actor at the
2016 Oscars*

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Thank you!

The project MINEV is implemented in the framework of the Interreg Europe programme and co-financed by the European Union.

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