



event:decision

THE SOCIAL VALUE YIELD OF EVENTS

From nice-to-have to strategic benefit, measuring, reporting and winning with the value events **already deliver.**

Matt Grey · event:decision

Why listen?

MATT GREY

30 years in events

Agency-side background - agency, production, global

Founder, event:decision

Five years old this September, 200+ clients in venue, destination, agency, brand, corporate & association.

Voice

Founder at event:decision & of the successful 'Most Sustainable Agencies' and forthcoming 'Responsible Futures' campaigns. Judge on the 'Power 50 Green Champions' and 'C&IT Impact Awards'.

EVENT:DECISION

'000s of events / year globally

Track carbon engine, plus **Impact: Event**, **AdVantage** and **VenueLens**

A who's-who client list

Agencies, venues, brands, destinations and associations

Sets the industry benchmark

Power 30 Most Sustainable; State of Sustainability research, content for the Sustainable Event Show, Event Industry News, micebook, C&IT, M&IT, C&MW.



**We can do
better**

A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and a wide, spreading canopy of green leaves stands on a grassy hill. The sun is shining through the branches, creating a bright lens flare. In the background, a valley with rolling hills and other trees is visible under a blue sky with some clouds. Two wooden benches are placed on the grass in front of the tree.

**Enhance
Brand Value**

**Stand out
from the crowd**



The carbon rabbit hole

Every ESG conversation in events collapses into the E..

Called carbon accountancy for a reason and it misses much of what responsible delivery should mean.

“I've sat on ESG panels where we didn't mention social at all.”

E

regulated, measured, table stakes

S

where events naturally excel - and almost never measure

G

risk, terms, method statements, process

CSR is not social value yield

The 'removability' test

CSR

The beach clean. Painting the changing rooms.

Remove it - the event still happens.

A bolt-on activity. Worth doing - but separable.

EVENT SOCIAL VALUE YIELD

The riggers, the carpet layers, the chefs, the waiting staff. You.

Remove it - there is no event.

Inherent in the infrastructure. A monetary figure, as a % of event budget.

A person's hands are holding a smartphone horizontally. The screen shows a video conference with several participants. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the phone and extends into the background. Inside this box, the words "PROOF" and "PROMISES" are written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, with the word "not" in a smaller font size between them. At the bottom right of the box, the phrase "The differentiating factor*" is written in a small, white, sans-serif font. The background is a blurred indoor setting with blue and white light bokeh.

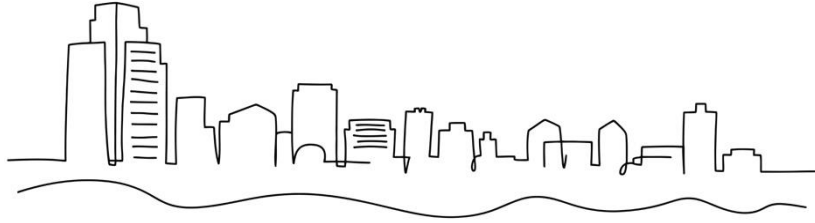
PROOF

not

PROMISES

The differentiating factor*

Proven at the biggest scale there is



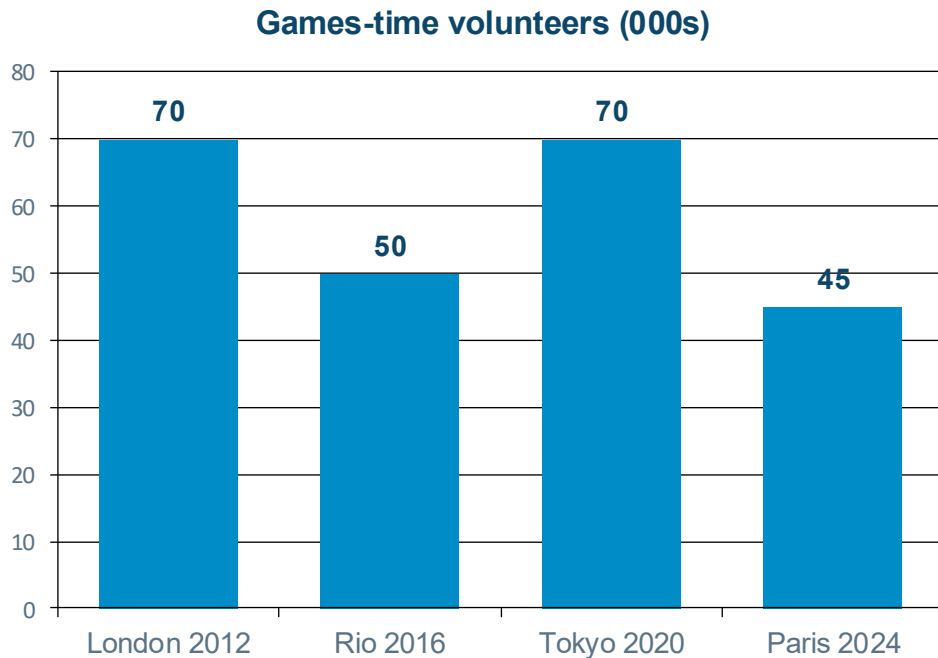
You are not rebuilding a city

But every mechanism those events used - local supply chains, skills programmes, fair work - replicates at any scale.

You are already doing it

Hundreds of events a year, each generating value for the people who deliver it. It's simply never recorded.

Olympic social value - what's measured



ONLY PARIS PUBLISHED SOCIAL OUTCOMES

2.6m+ hours

of work or training for people far from employment (social clauses)

500+ Social Enterprises

from 6,000 supported, delivering Games contracts

€2m

in contracts to inclusion-focused businesses

**The £12 billion
nobody claims**





Big numbers, no story.

The value is already being delivered

£68bn

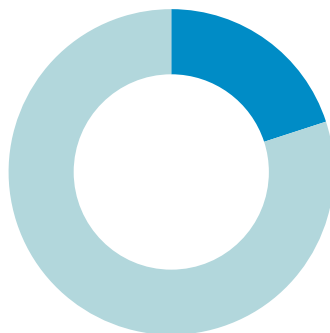
UK events sector
(UK Events Report, 2025)

10-30%

of an event budget defensibly aligns
with social value

£12bn

delivered at the 20% median -
unmeasured, unclaimed



■ Aligned with
social value
(20%)

■ Rest of event
spend

What actually counts

1

Living wage

Salaried and casual: waiting staff, AV crew, freelancers - every hour worked

2

Local suppliers

AV, teambuilds, florists - value kept in the host community

3

Local food & drink

"88% of food sourced within 50 km of the venue"

4

Skills development

Apprentices and juniors on site with a remit to learn

5

Access & inclusion

How people reach the event, the venue and the information

6

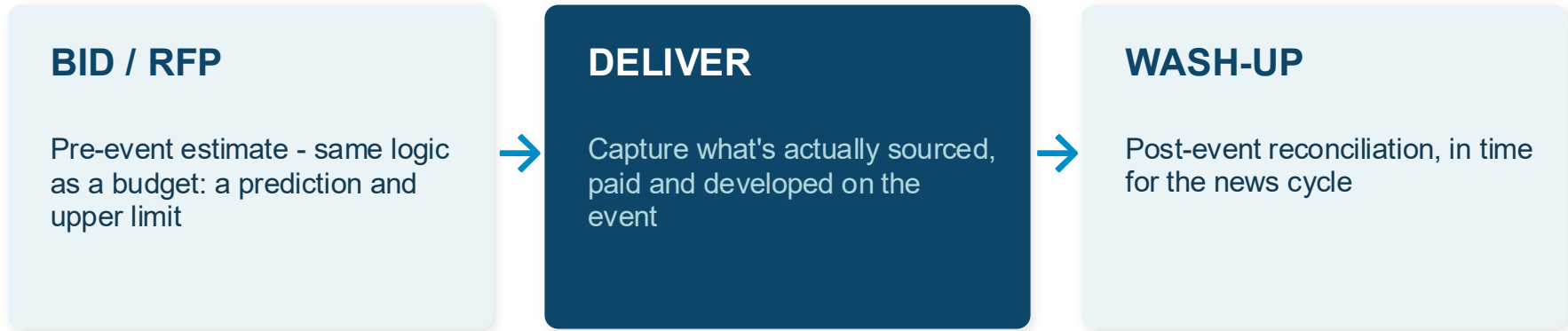
Social enterprises

Our industry is perfectly placed to deliver the work of many social enterprises.

How do we calculate?

event:decision impact Question Set Comparison				
Pillar	#	Impact: Event — Organiser level	Impact: AdvAntage — AV / Production supplier level	Impact: VenueLens — Venue level
ENVIRONMENT	1	Are you assessing the carbon footprint of your event?	Has power demand been actively reduced through equipment specification or system design choices for this project? e.g. LED fixtures, efficient amplification, low-draw display tech.	Is your venue location accessible via public or mass transport, without road transfers being required?
	2	Are you applying any carbon offset or compensation related to the emissions impact?	Are low-energy or LED-based conventional alternatives in project?	
	3	When selecting a destination or venue, do you consider accessibility via public or mass transport for attendees/crow?	Will carbon emissions associated with transport be calculated and recorded? e.g. freight.	
	4	Are you using a tool to measure attendees/crow travel and encouraging travel via the most sustainable route possible?	Have vehicle movements been optimised and recorded? e.g. optimisation, reduced reliance on private cars.	
	5	Does your selected venue/destination hold any independent sustainability certifications?	Are electric or low-emission crew transport on this project?	
	6	Is your venue taking steps to be more energy efficient?	Are crew travel modes being optimised? e.g. using a car over air car where feasible.	
	7	Does the venue have environmentally friendly waste management procedures in place? e.g. recycling, limiting single use plastics, surplus food distribution, composting etc.	Is existing inventory being utilised? e.g. additional crew-hire for this event.	
	8	When selecting a caterer or menu, are you considering local and seasonal F&B, balanced with nutritional value?	Are temporary materials being reused beyond the project in reusable cable management?	
	9	Are you sourcing local supply for crew, equipment and materials with reusability taken into consideration? Local supply is defined by event location as within 100km for national-level events, or within country at international events (with exceptions).	Has consumable use (tape, materials) been actively minimised?	
	10	Is the impact on biodiversity considered for your event, including supporting local projects?	Are your environmental requirements communicated to all sub-contractors? e.g. via briefing, contract clauses, questionnaires.	
SOCIAL	1	Are you specifically incorporating any of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) within your event planning process?	Are crew roles for this project aligned with agreed fair pay standards or living wage benchmarks? e.g. BECTU rate card, Living Wage Foundation, or equivalent regional standard.	Are you encouraging M&E: clients to engage local or regional suppliers for ancillary services (room dressing, decor, team activities etc)?
	2	Are you choosing to work with any social enterprises or charities to deliver elements of your event?	Are working hours scheduled to prevent excessive shift lengths or unsafe fatigue? e.g. turnaround rules applied, rest periods built into the schedule.	What provision do you have in place to maximise the social benefit associated with events hosted at your property? e.g. social enterprises, charity or inclusion partner prospects.
	3	Are you taking measures to minimise food waste and distribute surplus F&B?	Will all crew, including freelancers, receive a project-specific safety briefing before work begins on site?	What accessibility provisions does your venue have in place for delegates and crew with disabilities or additional needs for this event? e.g. mobility, sensory, neurodiversity, dietary.
	4	Are you measuring the economic impact to the area local to your event?	Are appropriate welfare provisions in place on site for all crew? e.g. rest areas, clean drinking water, hot food, accessible toilets.	Will all venue staff operating this event be working under a recognised fair pay policy? e.g. Living Wage accreditation covering directly employed and contracted staff.
	5	Are you planning a specific external legacy for your event?	Has the technical design incorporated accessibility solutions required for this event? e.g. hearing loops/BSL interpretation, stage access, contrast lighting, captioning, language support.	Will your venue actively employ people from underrepresented or marginalised groups as part of a formal programme?
	6	Are you planning an inclusive event and considering DEIA for all stakeholders including speakers, attendees and crew?	Are local crew or suppliers being used for this project where available and qualified? Supports local economic contribution and reduces crew travel & accommodation.	Could this event contribute to local community projects, charities, or social enterprises? e.g. via a CSR programme with measurable community impact.
	7	Is there any specific provision for your attendees' physical and mental wellbeing on site?	Is the local economic contribution of this project being tracked or identifiable? e.g. local spend, local hires, accommodation and catering from local businesses.	Does your venue have a food surplus redistribution programme in place for events and in-house catering on this event?
	8	Is there any specific provision for your event delivery team's physical and mental wellbeing on site?	Is this project being used as an opportunity for structured skills transfer from senior to junior crew members?	Do you measure and report on your venue's local economic contribution? e.g. via local spend tracking or annual ESG/Impact reporting.
	9	Does your company have a 'living wage' policy for contractors and sub-contractors?	Is redundant or end-of-life equipment from this project being donated or responsibly redistributed post-event? e.g. donated to schools, community groups, or low-income productions.	Do all staff operating this event fall under a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) policy?
	10	Are you engaging stakeholders with sustainable efforts and sharing best practice?	Are diversity and inclusion considerations reflected in crew selection or supplier choices for this project? e.g. actively engaging under-represented talent pools or diverse-owned businesses.	Is there a health and wellbeing programme in place for venue staff operating this event? e.g. covering mental, physical and financial wellbeing.
SUPPLIER	9	Are you completing quality assurance checks on suppliers, to ensure ethical alignment and good practice?	Will the outcomes of this ESG review be shared with your client following project delivery?	Does your venue set annual measurable sustainability targets and formally review progress?
	10	Does your own organisation hold any ESG-related accreditations within which you are planning this event? e.g. ISO, B Corp, EcoVadis etc.	Are lessons learned from this project captured and fed into your organisation's ongoing ESG improvement process? e.g. post-project review, external ESG reporting, supplier feedback loop.	Has your venue completed a materiality assessment to identify its primary ESG risks and opportunities for this specific event?

Measurement is not a three-month report



7–9 minutes per project, at scale

event:decision & Event Industry News 2026 hackathon of c.100 event professionals: every single team chose third-party, auditable, quick-turnaround measurement - not a three-month study. Events are transient; report while the news cycle is alive.

The commercial case

£405,000

of social value across **two events in three weeks**
– one UK incentive agency, previously
unmeasured.

Now within every RFP they submit.

Public sector already asks

The Social Value Act sets a % of contract value - these numbers are mandatory in government tenders

Private sector doesn't

Provide the number before they ask and you define the benchmark

Stickiness

Clients renew with suppliers who evidence value they didn't know they were buying

On Monday morning...

No budget required. Budget here means time.

Four things to do this week

1

Check your living wage status

Core staff are salaried - but your casuals, crew and freelancers? Sign up to a recognised standard

2

Audit your preferred suppliers

Are they local? Commercially they probably should be anyway

3

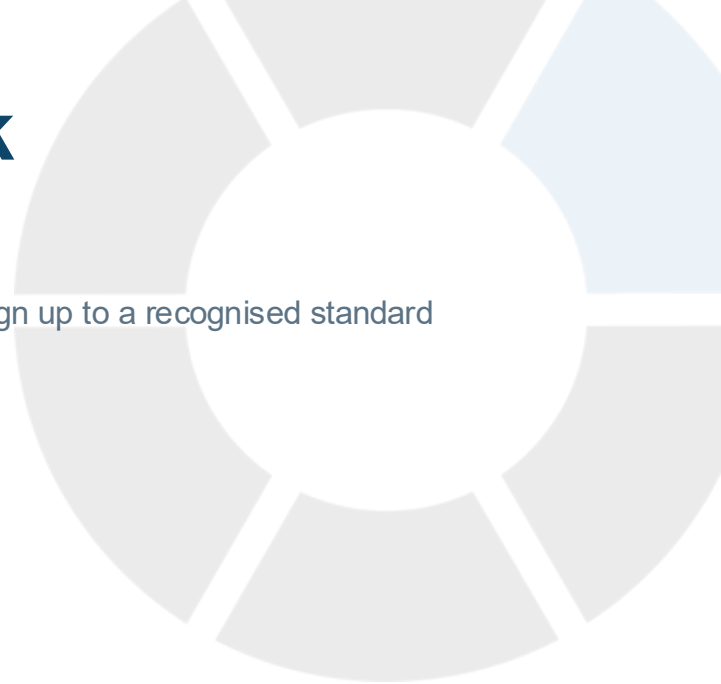
Put juniors on site to learn

Apprentices with a remit to watch - risk-managed by senior crew.

4

Record it - then report it

Not on every event. Pick the events that move the dial: by revenue, by delegate numbers, by visibility.



Change the language

WHAT WE SAY NOW

"We delivered this project at 1.2% less carbon than last year."

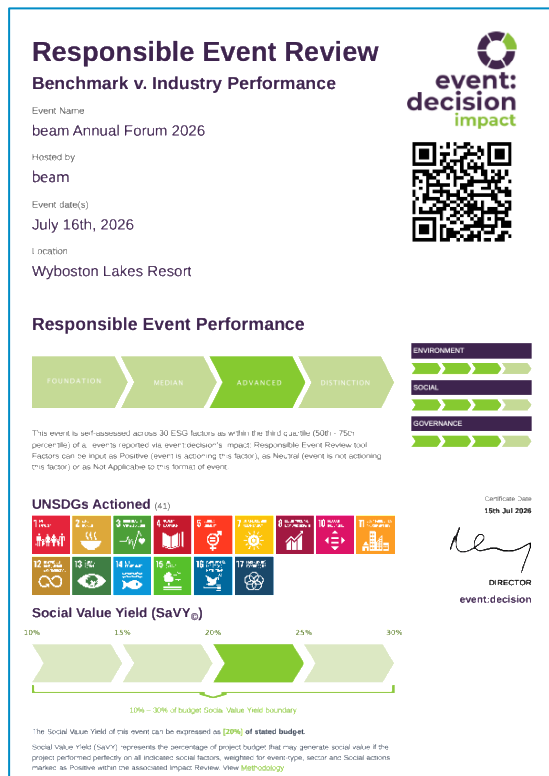
Factually great. Not exciting.

WHAT WE COULD SAY

"Your event allowed three juniors and an apprentice to learn new skills. 95% of suppliers were. All food from farms within 50 km. And AV crewing was provided by a social enterprise."

Nothing delivered differently - just evidenced.

Or SHOW your client

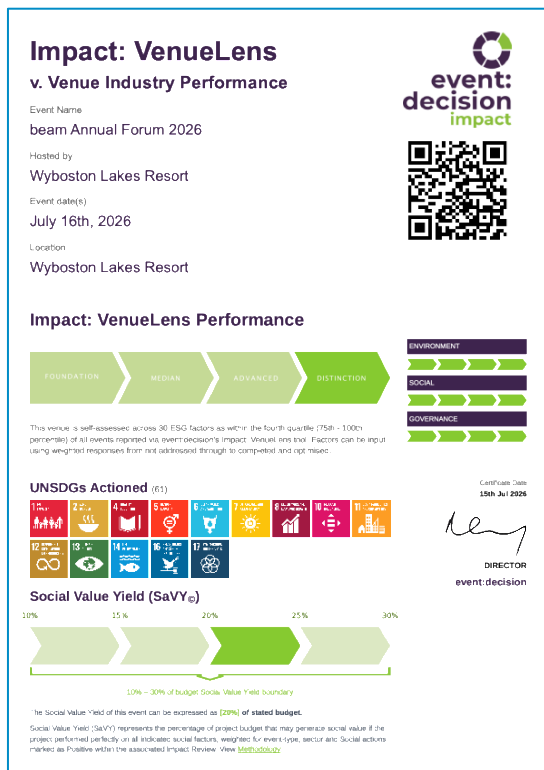


← Your event performance

← Your event SDGs

← Your event Social Value Yield

Or SHOW your client



← Your venue performance

← Your venue SDGs

← Your venue Social Value Yield

Operationally light



7 minutes / event



Carbon is table stakes. Social value is the differentiator.

The age of altruism is dead - align the good you already deliver with commercial outcomes. Measure it, report it, shout about it.



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