

Sustainable catering

Research on the state of climate-friendly,
sustainable catering in the meetings industry

by Toleranca Marketing in cooperation with Umanotera,
The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development

Research outline

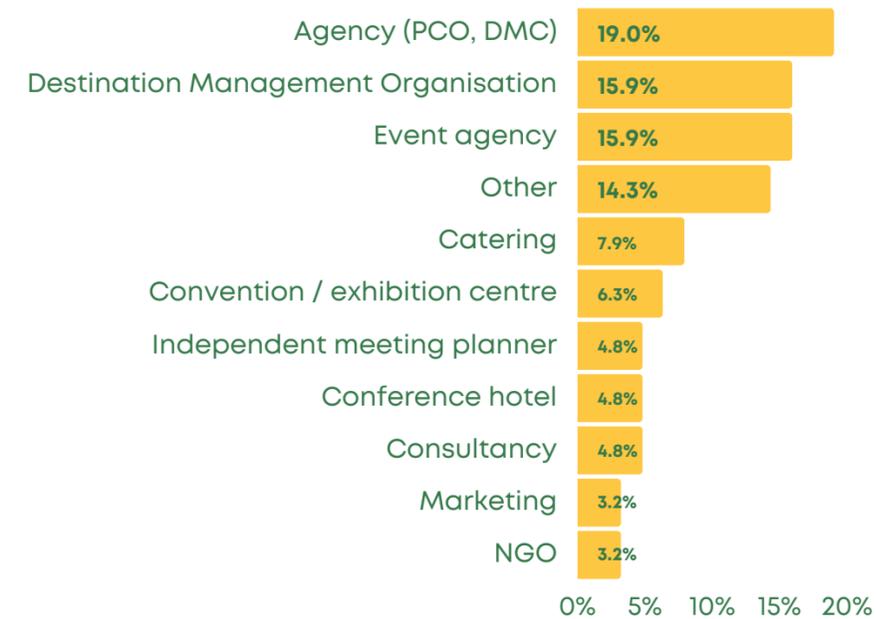
Catering is an important part of events, and it is often the thing that makes them memorable. What we eat and throw away at events has an immense impact on the environment, our health and well-being, and our general quality of life. In recent years, interest in climate-friendly, sustainable catering has increased.

In cooperation with Umanotera, The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, Toleranca Marketing analysed the current state of our industry in this field.

Methodology

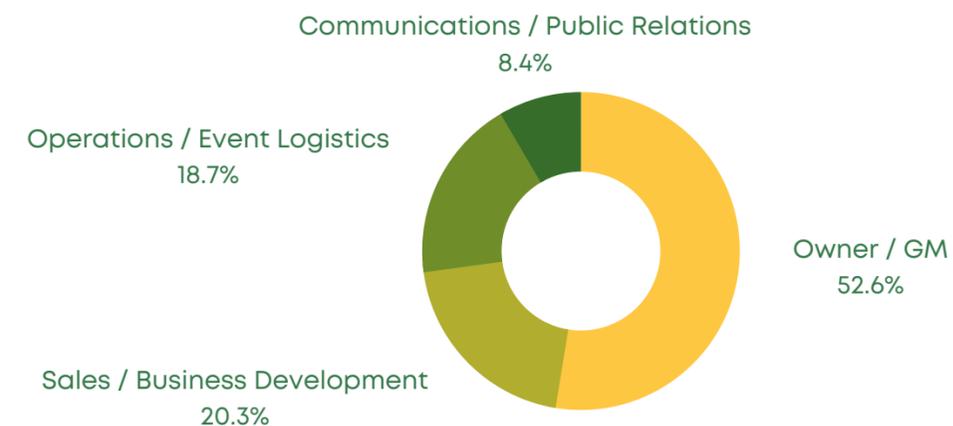
Data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions that was sent via email and shared across social media. The sampling frame was Kongres Magazine's database of meeting planners and social networks. Representing the target population in the research is a sample of 63 meeting planners presented in more detail below. The survey ran from 14 February 2022 to 18 March 2022.

Respondents work in the following organisations.



47.6% of respondents organise all types of events, **44.4%** primarily organise B2B events and only **7.9%** primarily organise B2C events

42.9% - Generation X
30.2% - Generation Y
23.8% - Baby Boomers
1.6% - Generation Z
1.6% - Mature generation



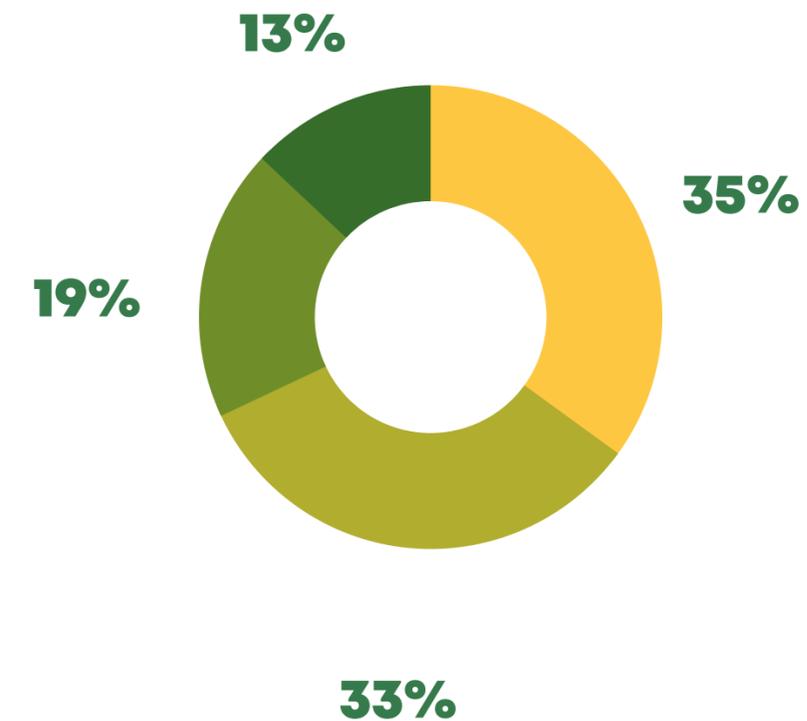
What is your company's current status in terms of reducing its carbon footprint?

Setting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets is on the agenda of most respondents

With the establishment of the Net Zero Coalition, European countries have set targets to progressively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible by 2050. Most respondents plan on setting GHG reduction targets or are in the process of setting them, but only 13% have done so already.

We have set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets

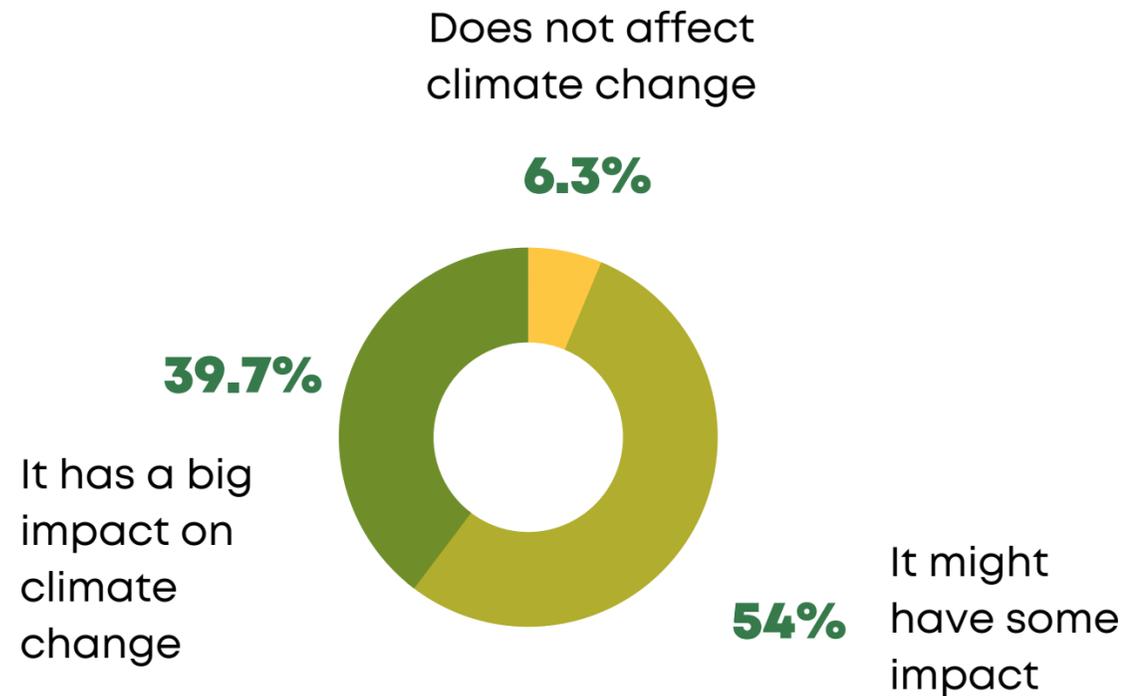
We have no current plans to set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets



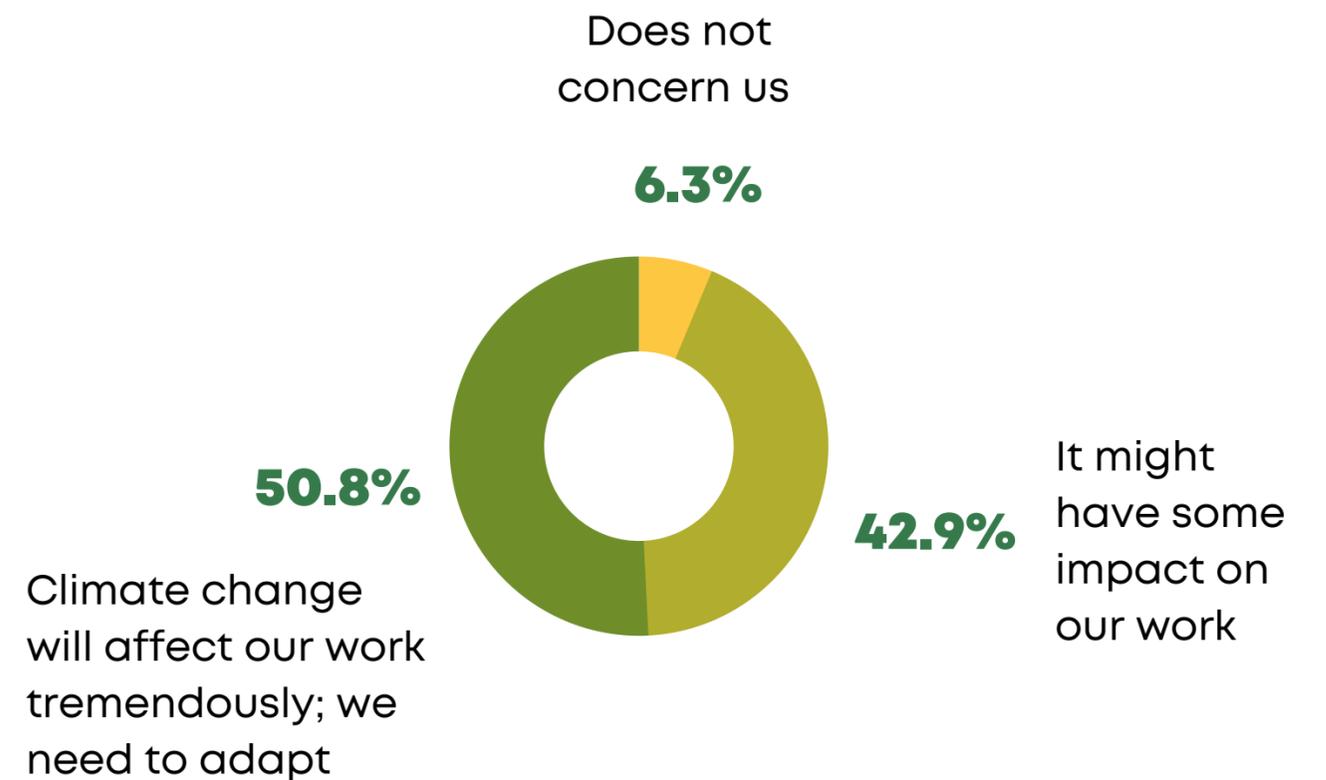
We are in the process of setting greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets

We plan to set greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets but have not yet started on the process

What is your general attitude towards the impact of organising events on climate change?



What is your general attitude towards the impact of climate change on organising events?



The most important factors when trying to reduce the carbon footprint of events

1 - not an important factor
5 - very important factor

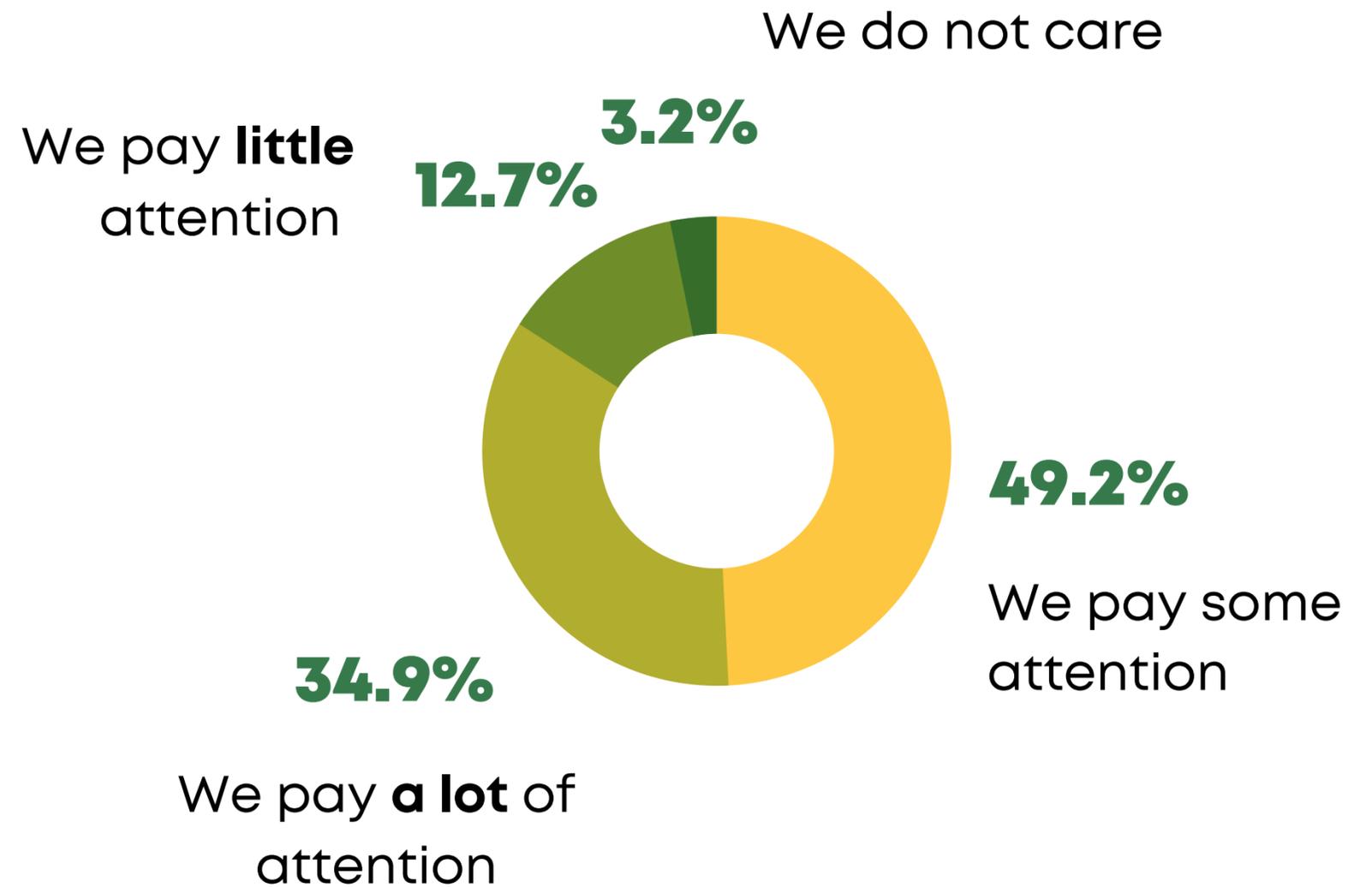


Mobility/transport is still the biggest cause of increased carbon footprint at events. This is especially problematic for events with international attendance, where sustainable modes of transport can not always be guaranteed. The corona crisis has highlighted the benefits of regionally focused events and taking advantage of hybrid event formats that allow international guests to join virtually.

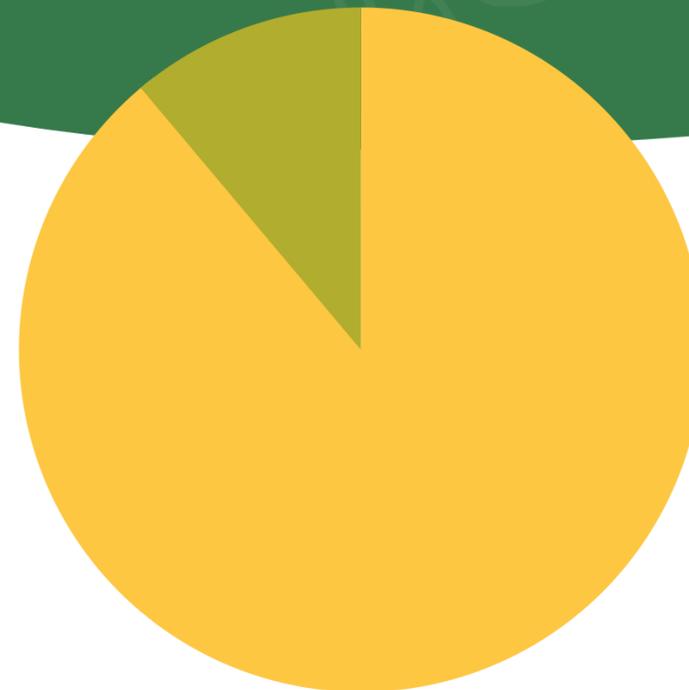
How much attention do you pay to the impact of catering on the environment & climate?

Raised awareness about sustainable catering at events

84.1% of respondents pay attention to the impact of catering on the environment & climate. This shows that awareness about the issue is improving each year.



“Catering at events has a considerable impact on the environment & climate?”



88.6% - Agree

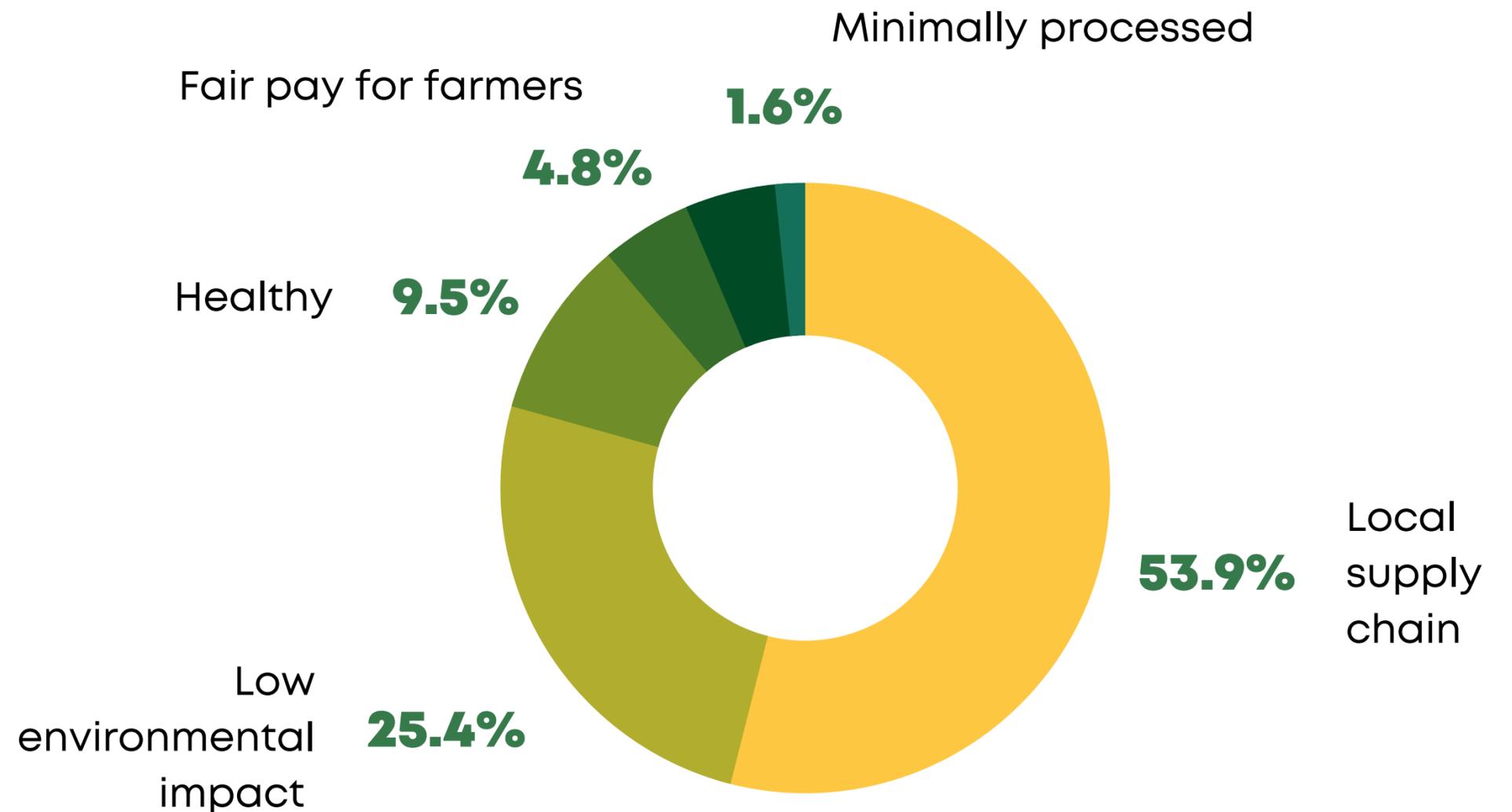
9.5% - Disagree

1.6% - Undecided

What comes to your mind first when thinking about sustainable catering?

From farm to plate

The most common association with sustainable catering is a **local supply chain**. This is in line with the "farm-to-table" concept which advocates that the ingredients catering providers use come from local farms and gardens, traveling short distances before arriving on the plates of event attendees.



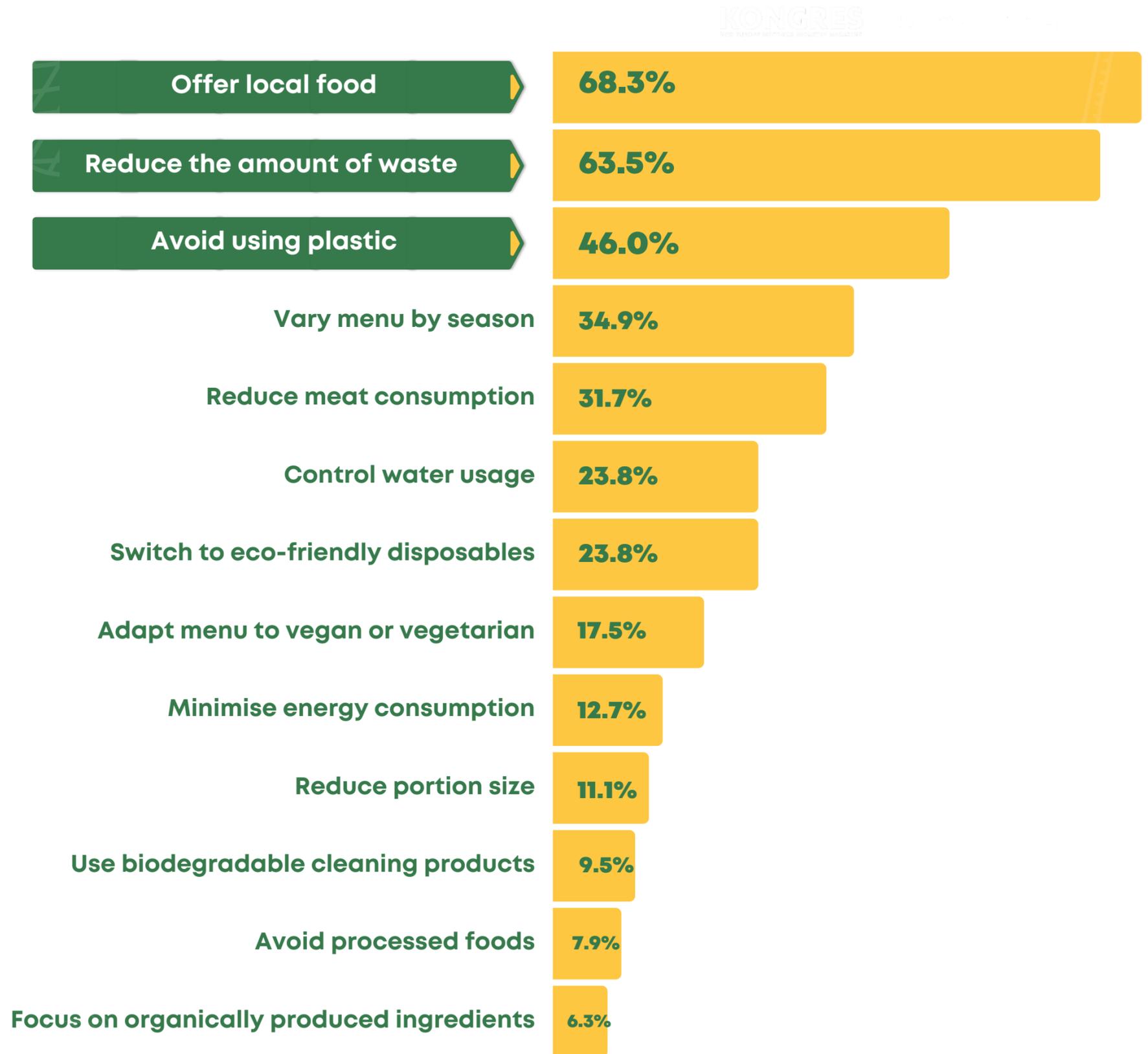
How would you assess the following motives for introducing sustainable catering at events?

We only have one planet

Respondents listed **protecting the environment** as the most important motive for introducing sustainable catering at events. Social responsibility (e.g. fair pay for producers) and health benefits are also important motives.



TOP 3 activities that contribute the most to reducing the carbon footprint of catering



Main difficulty in implementing more sustainable catering

Sustainable catering is expensive

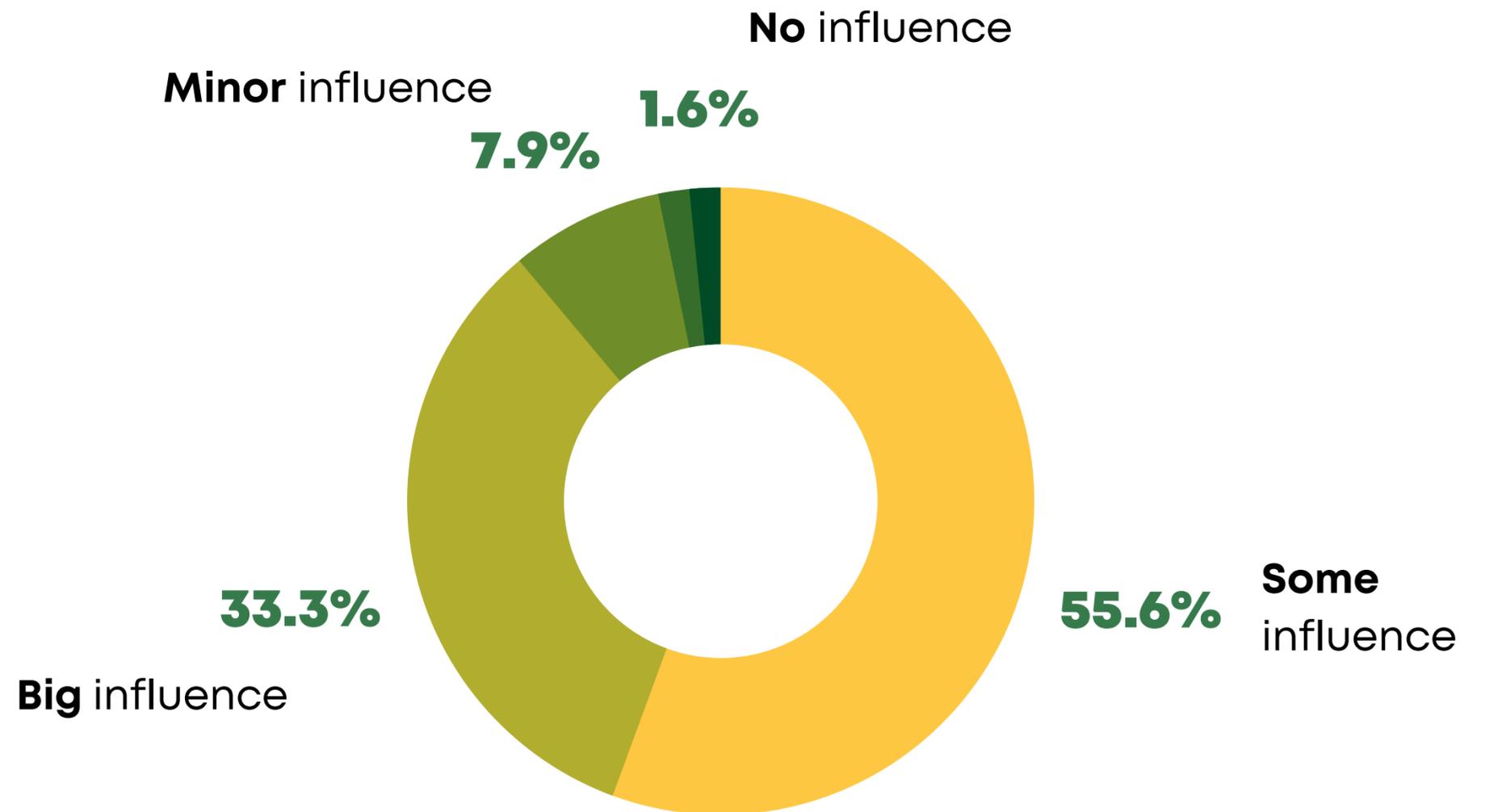
The general consensus among respondents is that the main difficulty in implementing greener, more sustainable catering is the **higher cost** that comes with it. At Umanotera, The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, they are proving that this is not always the case. Event organisers can reach the same cost-effectiveness by smartly choosing local providers, adapting portion sizes, and reducing wasted food.



To what extent will catering be influenced by sustainability concerns after 2022?

Change is imminent

The majority of respondents agree that catering will be influenced by sustainability concerns. Still, 9,5% believe that it will have minor or no influence on catering providers. 1.6% don't know the extent.



Familiarity with **green** **catering** **certificates**

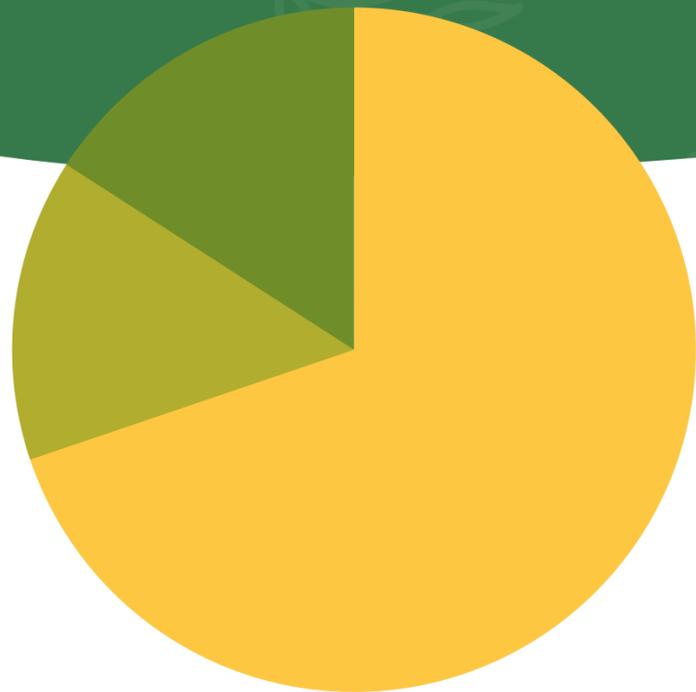


1 - very familiar,
5 - not at all familiar

The results show that respondents are not very familiar with green catering certificates, which means there is still room for improvement when it comes to promoting membership.

Established in 1989, The Nordic Swan ecolabel is one of the toughest and most recognized environmental certifications, which was confirmed by our research..

Have you made any attempt to measure the carbon footprint of catering at your events?



No - 69.8%

Yes - 14.3%

I don't know - 15.9%

If yes; did you hire an external consultant or did you do it in-house?

Most respondents hired an external consultant, but the general consensus is that there aren't sufficient tools available to measure carbon footprint, hence the high percentage of negative answers.

Respondents, who did measure carbon footprint at their event mentioned that the results helped them improve. They realised that a big problem is food waste, especially due to COVID-19 measures and high no-show rates.

Greatest challenges to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the field of catering at events

PRICE

unmotivated public

packaging

travel

meat

consumption

mobility

disposables

education

laws

SERVICE COST

unsustainable supply chain

plastic

regulations

equipment

FOOD WASTE

promotion

TRANSPORT

energy consumption