

BEST PRACTICES

for Documentaries
and Nature Shoots



The Rolling Green program was launched in 2021 by the Quebec Film and Television Council, with the help of Quebecor and the Conseil québécois des événements écoresponsables. Formed in response to the audiovisual industry's need to conduct its business in a more sustainable way, Rolling Green has created a solid and durable ecosystem by collaborating with sustainability experts and the industry's various stakeholders.

Since 2021, Rolling Green has been busy delivering tools, training programs and resources specifically designed for various industry players working on shoots or in the field of visual effects and animation. All these resources are available on the Rolling Green website, in both French and English.

Rolling Green is also dispensing accreditation aiming to recognize and promote environmentally friendly productions.

Last but not least, the program unites the entire Quebec industry behind environmentally friendly productions, which are essential to accelerating the ecological transition that the industry needs to make.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To identify best practices, Rolling Green spoke to a number of producers, environmental protection associations and other organizations who shared their expertise. Our sincere thanks go to all those who helped bring this guide to fruition, in particular Leave No Trace Canada and Wapikoni.

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FOREWORD

The audiovisual industry emits a considerable amount of greenhouse gases through the production, distribution and broadcasting of works. Several studies carried out in recent years have revealed that this sector is highly polluting and therefore requires the rapid implementation of more environmentally friendly measures.

A Telefilm Canada study¹, published in the fall of 2023, provided the following estimate: the total annual carbon footprint of audiovisual content financed in Canada is approximately **7126 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent** (also written “t CO₂ eq”) for the production of Canadian feature films, and **260,843 t CO₂ eq** for Canadian TV series. To put things in perspective, one tonne of CO₂ is roughly equivalent to a one-way flight from Paris to New York!

Additionally, the average episode for a series, evaluated through a study of 22 Canadian productions, amounts to **280 t CO₂ eq**.

The study identified the two biggest sources of emissions: **travel and transport**, accounting for 58% of the total, and **materials**, representing 23% (food, textiles, plastics, cardboard, metal, paint, etc.).

Transport and, more broadly, travel, remain one of the top challenges for documentary teams. This is because they are more likely to travel long distances, sometimes across several countries, in order to capture images and testimonials from all over the world. The vast majority of these journeys are made by plane, which has a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

It is therefore essential to act on the polluting activities that can be reined in, and to implement an environmentally friendly policy that will be applied consistently throughout all projects.

Rolling Green has developed this best practice guide to offer alternatives and practical solutions to help reduce the carbon footprint of documentaries. This guide is designed as a resource to start or pursue a sustainable development approach, while identifying the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

It consists of two complementary parts:

- 01** The first part is dedicated to **documentary shoots** and the challenges faced by their crews
- 02** The second part focuses more specifically on **outdoor filming in wild and natural environments**, where human activities can have serious impacts on the fauna and flora.

It is by understanding their distinctive environmental challenges that professionals can help reduce their environmental impact and promote a shift towards a more responsible industry.

To take this approach a step further, Rolling Green has also introduced a special accreditation system for documentaries, adapted to their shooting realities. The Rolling Green accreditation aims to recognize and encourage environmentally friendly productions.

¹ <https://telefilm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Estimationdelempreintecarbone-FR-GSG.pdf>

WHY MAKE AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY DOCUMENTARY?

- To reduce its impact on the environment
- To encourage and support the adoption of environmentally friendly best practices by integrating sustainable development principles
- To set an example for peers, other media and the public
- To raise awareness among stakeholders (crews, financial backers, the general public, partners, suppliers, etc.)
- To stand out as an innovative organization and stimulate the creativity of the staff
- To support and stimulate a local economy with ethical suppliers

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS GUIDE?

- Identify best practices and valid alternatives
- Reduce and, ideally, eliminate practices that pollute and harm the planet
- Identify areas for improvement and set targets
- Adopt an environmentally friendly strategy for all audiovisual productions

KEY CONCEPTS

The “5 Rs”

Refuse

Say no to things you do not need (especially single-use products).

Reduce

Rethink your consumption and only purchase the amounts you need.

Repair

Repair the objects you own to extend their lifespan and lessen their environmental impact.

Reuse

Give a second life to an object by using it again rather than buying a new one.

Recycle

Correctly sort and recycle products made from recyclable materials.

Life-cycle Assessment

The life-cycle assessment is an approach and a decision-making tool that makes it possible to gauge the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of a product or service. It is a comprehensive approach that considers all the **stages in the life-cycle of a product or service** (from extraction of raw materials to end-of-life), as well as numerous sustainability issues (climate change, effects on biodiversity, use of mineral and fossil resources, etc.).²

Responsible Procurement

Sustainable sourcing refers to the integration of social, ethical and environmental performance factors into the supplier selection process. This means choosing suppliers who adhere to sustainable development principles, which include efficient use of resources, minimization of operational waste and environmental impact mitigation.³

Responsible Communication

Responsible communication is a practice that integrates sustainable development principles into communication strategies. The aim is to minimize environmental and social impacts while maximizing added value for stakeholders. This includes broadcasting ethical messages, using eco-designed communication supports and promoting responsible behaviour.⁴

Circular Economy

Circular economy is a production, exchange and consumption system designed to optimize the use of resources at every stage in the life-cycle of a good or a service, within a circular logic, while reducing the environmental footprint and contributing to the well-being of individuals and communities.⁵

Eco-responsibility

Eco-responsibility involves adopting behaviours and practices that respect the environment and preserve natural resources for future generations. This goes beyond simple ecological gestures and involves a global reflection about the way we live, consume and produce.

CO₂ Equivalent

CO₂ equivalent is a reference value used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases based on their global warming potential (e.g.: 1 tonne of methane = 25 tonnes CO₂ equivalent).⁶

² CIRAIG - <https://ciraig.org/>

³ Greenly - Qu'est-ce que l'approvisionnement durable? (2023, 10 mars). <https://greenly.earth/fr-fr/blog/guide-entreprise/qu-est-ce-que-l-approvisionnement-durable>

⁴ Définition de la communication responsable (ou communication durable). (2023, 3 mai). Youmatter, <https://youmatter.world/fr/definition/communication-responsable-definition/>

⁵ Québec circulaire (2020, 29 septembre). Concept et définition, [quebeccirculaire.org. https://www.quebeccirculaire.org/static/concept-et-definition.html](https://www.quebeccirculaire.org/static/concept-et-definition.html)

⁶ Carbon dioxide equivalent. (2022). Termium, Government of Canada. https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&i=1&srchtxt=EQUIVALENT+DIOXYDE+CARBONE&codom2nd_wet=1#resultreccs

Greenhouse Gases

A greenhouse gas is a gas present in the atmosphere that retains part of the sun's heat. An increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere results in a rise in temperature. Some gases are naturally occurring (water vapour, for example) while others, such as fluorinated gases, are generated by human activities.⁷

Planned Obsolescence

Planned obsolescence is the deliberate shortening of a product's lifespan in order to speed up its replacement. It implies an exponential consumption of raw materials. To meet an artificially created demand, the environment is considerably degraded: large-scale soil excavation, land clearing, loss of vegetation and destruction of fertile farmland needed to ensure food security. This mechanism encourages overconsumption and overproduction to artificially boost growth. Planned obsolescence has serious consequences on the environment.

Digital Sobriety

Digital sobriety consists of allocating resources according to usage, in compliance with planetary limits, while preserving the most valuable societal benefits of digital technologies.⁸

Source Reduction

Actions that prevent or reduce the generation of waste during the design, manufacture, distribution and use of a product.⁹

⁷ <https://www.notre-environnement.gouv.fr/>

⁸ Shift Project. (October 25, 2023) "Climate crisis: the unsustainable use of online video": Our new report on the environmental impact of ICT The Shift Project. <https://theshiftproject.org/en/article/unsustainable-use-online-video/>

⁹ Recyc-Québec

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01 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPORTANT

It is a good idea to have someone in charge of the eco-responsibility initiative, such as an “eco-gatekeeper” or a “green coordinator”. This will help raise awareness among the rest of the crew, ensure that the green plan is optimized and properly coordinated with all departments, and rally the entire team around the goal of reducing the environmental impact of the production. This can be a crew member willing to support the initiative.

At the same time, it is essential that the whole crew pull together to meet the desired eco-responsibility targets. To achieve this, each individual must measure the importance of their actions and their impact throughout the production.

1. Planning

A good plan from the outset makes it easier to achieve objectives, and to take action at the various stages of the production.

Recommendations

- In pre-production: draw up an eco-responsibility strategy and green plan.
- Designate a person to champion the project and make it known to the rest of the team.
- In order to reduce waste at the source as much as possible, identify the items needed for each trade and anticipate quantities, uses and end-of-life for all appliances, props and other objects.

2. Communicating Your Approach

2.1 Internally

As stated above, it is essential to take the time to explain the process to the whole team. This will rally the whole organization and allow everyone to have an impact.

Recommendations

- Inform your team and raise their awareness by explaining the changes planned and the approach used.
- Announce the set objectives.
- If possible, hire a green coordinator to establish a strategy ahead of time and to be on site to help during the shoot.
- Alternatively, designate someone to be responsible for the green plan and its execution, and make the rest of the team aware of their role and importance.
- Keep the team updated about progress on the production's eco-responsible actions during filming.

Remember to offer training to your teams!


To find out more, consult our resources on page 30.

- Make reference documents available digitally.
- Share eco-friendly tips with the team on a regular basis to help reduce the team's environmental footprint on the set (communications, e-mails, notices, notes on the service sheet, etc.).
- Delete obsolete documents from your servers periodically (e-mails, documents related to past projects, etc.).
- Compile a greenhouse gas balance sheet for the shoot using the Albert calculator or another recognized carbon calculator.
- After the shoot, survey the crew members on their perception and appreciation of the environmentally friendly measures adopted.

2.2 Externally

It is equally important to communicate effectively with your various stakeholders, including the general public.


Recommendations

- Acquire the Rolling Green accreditation:
 - Set an example for peers;
 - Gain recognition for your commitment and efforts;
 - Reward teamwork.
- Think about on-screen eco-gestures: spectators can retain a great deal of information and reproduce certain behaviours. It is possible to make a positive impact by simply modifying dialogues and on-screen elements (no single-use items, recycling, use of electric cars or public transit, etc.).
- Integrate environmental and social considerations in the texts or the issues covered by the documentary.
- Highlight the production's eco-responsibility on the various social networks of the production company, the distributor or the broadcaster (according to the principles of  **responsible communication**). This approach may also draw in other productions interested in coproduction.
- Insert the Rolling Green logo or accreditation in the production's promotional material.
- Communicate your commitment to eco-responsibility to your suppliers and other stakeholders (broadcasters, documentary contributors, financial partners, locations, studios, etc.).

3. Responsible Procurement


A documentary shoot may require fewer purchases than a fiction shoot in terms of equipment, costumes or sets. Nevertheless, responsible sourcing is essential in order to reduce the impact of the production.

By focusing on local and ethical sourcing, it is possible to significantly reduce the environmental footprint while encouraging and supporting eco-responsible suppliers.

To properly manage procurement, it is important to take into account the  **life-cycle analysis** of all products and services. A number of industrial practices contribute to land grabs and the depletion of natural resources, to the disregard of indigenous peoples' and local communities' fundamental rights, to dangerous or inhumane working conditions, and to the exposure of local populations to pollutants.



Recommendations

- Avoid all single-use items (wipes, cups, cutlery, etc.).
- Avoid single-use promotional items or communication media.
- Rent whenever possible.
- Favour bulk and/or wholesale purchases.
- Avoid overpackaged and non-recyclable products.
- Avoid products designed with a strategy of  **programmed obsolescence**
- Replace single-use plastic with reusable items.
- Give preference to products bearing a recognized and certified label (e.g., Ecocert, Energy Star, EU Ecolabel, Fairtrade, FSC, Sustainable agricultural network, B Corp, Produits du Québec, etc.).
- Choose nontoxic, organic and fair-trade cleaning products.
- Choose organic and fair-trade makeup products.
- Use eco-responsible suppliers.

3.1 Meals

Even if documentary crews are smaller than fiction crews, it may be worthwhile to focus on certain meals, especially when filming on location, as this can generate additional waste. Food is the second most polluting category (listed under “equipment” in carbon balance sheets). It is therefore an area that offers significant opportunities, where decisions can have a major impact on reducing the global footprint.

USEFUL INFORMATION

A vegetarian meal represents 510 g CO₂ eq, while a meal containing meat can be as high as 7.26 kg CO₂ eq (in the case of beef)!¹⁰

Meat is the world’s leading cause of deforestation. Millions of hectares of forest are cleared to grow soya and corn for animal feed. Livestock farming produces up to 7 billion tonnes of CO₂ per year, accounting for 14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions linked to human activities. Meat production also requires large quantities of water, much more than is needed to grow cereals.

Reducing meat consumption and opting for vegetarian meals are a key factor in terms of protecting the planet.

ANOTHER HABIT TO ADOPT: BUY LOCAL, SEASONAL AND ORGANIC

Why buy local?

For one thing, shorter distances between products and consumers mean less transport and less greenhouse gas emissions. A tomato from Mexico travels an estimated 3,000 km by refrigerated truck before arriving on the Canadian east coast. A single truck contributes more than 4.5 tonnes of GHG emissions.¹¹

In addition, eating locally and in season is a way of supporting the local economy while preserving the region and its agricultural know-how.

In Canada, eating local products also has a social impact since local produce is implicitly fair trade, i.e., that producers are paid a fair wage and that they work in decent and safe conditions.

It is also essential to give preference to organically grown products to prevent the use of pesticides and other products that are toxic to the environment and our health.

¹⁰ ADEME - France

¹¹ <https://www.equiterre.org/fr/ressources/fiche-kilometrage-alimentaire>

Recommendations

- Plan meals and quantify them: this avoids unnecessary and unforeseen food wastage and garbage.
- Choose seasonal, local and fair-trade foods, and work with a caterer who uses these products.
- Always offer at least one vegetarian option.
- Plan one day a week with 100% vegetarian meals.
- Do not use seafood that is on the red list (North America red-rated list: seafoodwatch.org).
- Offer leftover food to team members or charities (e.g., Second Harvest).
- When filming on location, if possible, eat in restaurants to avoid packaging waste.
- Encourage team members to bring their own water bottles, cups and reusable utensils.
- Provide reusable tableware for all members.
- Avoid number 6 plastic containers¹² as much as possible (these are rarely recycled in Quebec).

3.2 Costumes, Sets and Props

Even if the use of costumes is less frequent for documentaries, remember that thrift stores and other clothing collection organizations can be useful to clothe the people on screen (journalists, presenters, etc.)!

USEFUL INFORMATION

The textile industry is the world's 4th most polluting! According to estimates, the textile industry is responsible for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions. Globally, 85% of produced textiles end up at landfills within a year.¹³

Props and sets are no different. Alternatives can be sourced from thrift stores, rental companies or other production houses. Pooling resources can be highly advantageous on many levels.

To find out more, consult the "Eco-responsible Costumes Guide".

Recommendations

- Choose used or leased items for props instead of buying new.
- Use existing sets or previously used materials (Écoscéno, La Remise Culturelle).
- Plan with dismantling in mind so that items can be reused as donations to schools, local charities or second-hand organizations (consider using platforms like the Rolling Green Facebook group to spread the word).
- Choose nontoxic, organic and cruelty-free cosmetics.
- Give clothing and costumes a second life after the shoot (donations to local charities or schools, store returns, stock for other productions, etc.).

¹² More information in the Guide to Sustainable Audiovisual Productions

¹³ Radio Canada - Fast fashion : overconsumption and pollution

4. Camera, Sound, Lighting, Grip and Power

Through the choice of cameras, lighting and sound devices, it is possible to adopt eco-responsible practices while maintaining optimum performance. The aim is to maximize energy efficiency¹⁴ and to integrate sustainable solutions at every stage of the shoot. By using lighter, more energy-efficient equipment and preferring renewable energy sources, you help preserve the environment while lowering long-term operating costs.

Recommendations

- Choose energy-efficient lighting and equipment.
- Give preference to natural outdoor light.
- Use LED lighting as much as possible (lighter and less energy-intensive).
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- When possible, choose electric (or hybrid) generators.
- Use rechargeable batteries for microphones, headsets, personal receivers and microphone transmitters and recharge them with smart chargers.
- When not in use, turn off lights and unplug electronic equipment (video player, monitor, etc.).
- Donate equipment you no longer use to schools.

5. Transport and Logistics

Travel is one of the main challenges facing documentary teams, as they have to make short and long journeys on a regular basis. Anticipating journeys and planning itineraries as accurately as possible is the key to avoiding unnecessary travel.

Recommendations

- Rent a minibus to travel with your team and carry your equipment.
- Rent electric or hybrid vehicles.
- Promote carpooling and soft mobility.
- Provide concrete incentives to encourage soft mobility (make bicycles available, provide showers, offer refunds for public transit, etc.).
- Organize carpooling within teams (rotate shifts, change pick-up sequence, etc.).
- Prohibit engine idling.
- Stay on location: in many ways, it can be cost-effective to sleep on location (time savings, increased sleep time and energy, potential cost reductions).
- Opt for accommodation that has received the “Clé verte” environmental certification.
- Choose locations easily accessible by public transit.
- Shoot as many scenes as possible in the same location in order to reduce the number of sites and the travelling required.

¹⁴ Ratio of energy output to energy input

6. Residual Materials Management

Residual materials management can be a complex task. It is important to be aware of local regulations in order to make the best decisions.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Quebec households and businesses sent 5,766,000 tonnes of waste to “disposal” (landfill or incinerator) in 2021, an increase of 8% over 2018. Construction, renovation and demolition wastes are mainly responsible for this increase (source : Recyc-Québec).

Reducing waste at source reduces the volumes sent to recycling or landfill sites.

Recommendations

- Provide clearly marked bins near eating areas for recyclables, compostables and non-recyclables.
- Collect returnable cans and bottles and bring them back to the retailer.
- On set, collect and sort obsolete electronic and electrical products as well as equipment (cameras, lighting, etc.), and dispose of them appropriately (donate, lend or sell, or send them to a refurbishing or recycling facility, an écocentre, etc.).
- Display posters to raise awareness and to help staff understand best practices (Rolling Green posters).
- Consult Recyc-Québec’s “Ça va où?” app.

7. Particularities of Long-distance and/or Foreign Shoots

Transport, and especially air transport, is one of the most polluting components of an audiovisual production. Avoiding air travel whenever possible can have a major impact on the carbon footprint of a production.

À SAVOIR

Many countries in Europe and North America have guidelines for best practices tailored to their region.

Recommendations

- Choose to travel by train or minibus whenever possible.
- Minimize the number of people travelling and prioritize those whose presence is essential.
- Use local crews: when filming abroad, it may be advantageous to use local crews to limit air travel.
- Use local suppliers to reduce the need for material transport and to support the local economy.
- Find out about local environmental rules and regulations (waste management, filming regulations, restrictions, eco-bonuses, etc.). - *Useful information: many countries in Europe and North America publish best practice guides adapted to their territory.*
- Raise awareness among local teams and brief them on your eco-responsible approach.

For multi-site or international shoots, calling on local professionals is often an effective way of minimizing impacts by eliminating air travel. Additionally, working with local crews contributes to the growth and diversification of professional expertise in several regions.

8. End of the Shoot

USEFUL INFORMATION

Carbon offsetting should be considered a complementary measure to at-source reduction, rather than an instantaneous solution to greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, before offsetting, it is essential to ensure that GHG emissions have been significantly reduced.

Recommendations

- Remember to donate props, clothing and equipment to team members or charitable organizations.
- Collect and recycle (building materials, electronic products, paints, etc.).
- Think about pooling resources that you can lend or give to other productions.
- Share resources by word-of-mouth or through sharing groups (Rolling Green Facebook group).
- Discuss the shoot and the eco-responsible measures put in place with the whole team, and highlight the successes.
- Support carbon offset programs by carefully selecting a qualified organization (e.g., Gold Standard, CCB, VCS, etc.).

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR SMALL TEAMS?

If you want to keep it simple and prioritize your actions, the following strategies are a good place to start:

Recommendations

- Choose vegetarian meals
- Encourage the use of reusable utensils
- Ban plastic bottles and other over-packaged, single-use items
- Opt for energy-efficient lighting and electrical equipment
- Promote local and fair trade purchases
- Make the team understand the need for these changes
- Set up carpooling
- Opt for equipment rentals and second-hand purchases

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02 OUTDOOR AND WILDERNESS SHOOTING

INTRODUCTION

Wild and natural environments are stressed by repeated human activity: sporting events, festivals, film shoots and so on. Unfortunately, many sites can become overused and damaged as a result of their appeal.

The aim of this second part is to help **minimize the impact of human activities** on flora and fauna during filming.

KEY CONCEPTS

Natural Environment

Natural environments are habitats for a variety of animal and plant species, ensuring biological diversity. Natural environments can be divided into three categories: forests (or forest crowns), urban woodlands and wetlands.¹⁵ Conversely, an artificial environment is one in which natural cycles are stopped or diverted. For example, golf courses, botanical gardens and zoos are not considered natural environments.

Climate Change

Climate change is defined as a lasting change in the planet's climate or its various regional climates. While it may be due to natural phenomena, such as variations in solar activity, since the mid-19th century it has been the result of increased concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, caused by human activities.¹⁶

Biodiversity

Biodiversity encompasses all species and ecosystems on Earth, as well as the ecological processes of which they are a part. In fact, it encompasses all living things, including varieties created by genetic manipulation or selective breeding. This diversity constitutes the biosphere, the tangle of living organisms that makes it possible for human beings to exist on the planet.¹⁷

¹⁵ City of Québec

¹⁶ Oxfam

¹⁷ Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec

USEFUL INFORMATION

Some 75% of land habitats and 40% of marine ecosystems are severely degraded: this is the alarming assessment shared by international experts. Worldwide, one million species are threatened with extinction. The rate of extinction is 100 to 1000 times higher than the natural rate of extinction: we are talking about a sixth mass extinction of species. This loss of biodiversity is largely the consequence of human activities, which exert significant pressure on nature.¹⁸

RISKS TO FLORA AND FAUNA ASSOCIATED WITH FILMING

The excessive interest in natural and sensitive sites and their overuse, as seen with some popular locations for film shoots, can cause significant damage:

- Wildlife disturbances from human and chemical odours, light pollution, noise pollution, waste and potential pollutants (chemicals).
- Sensitive areas trampled by the weight of equipment or by too many crew members.
- Degraded natural habitats for animals.
- Animal displacements.
- Changes in animal behaviour: disruptions to their breeding season; flight, attack or defence behaviours; fear; attraction to artificial lights; stress; offspring abandonment, etc.
- Diseases and health consequences caused by the unintentional introduction of bacteria or viruses (via equipment, clothing, footwear, etc.).
- Risks of erosion, fire and soil contamination.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF “LEAVE NO TRACE”

Leave No Trace Canada is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting outdoor ethics and the seven Leave No Trace principles with the goal of encouraging Canadians to enjoy the benefits of the outdoors while protecting Canada’s natural and cultural heritage.¹⁹

Leave No Trace has compiled seven key principles that can be adapted to shoots:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plan ahead and prepare	Use durable surfaces	Dispose of waste properly	Leave what you find	Minimize campfire impacts	Respect wildlife	Be considerate of others

¹⁸ <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/politiques-publiques/biodiversite-presentation-enjeux>

¹⁹ For more information: <https://leavenotrace.ca/the-seven-principles-of-leave-no-trace/>

Best practices to limit your presence

1. Prepare for the Shoot: Gather Information

- Contact and coordinate with the organization managing the site, and ensure that all necessary authorizations are obtained.
- Be familiar with the rules, access rights and restrictions applicable to the site (protected species, soil erosion risks, chemical bans, etc.).
- Contact the First Nation council(s) of the community and provide information about your project. By collaborating with the guardians of the area, you can adjust your activities according to the local values regarding respect for nature.
- Find out about the plant and animal species that can be found on the site:
 - Are there any rare and/or protected species?
 - How to share the site with them without disturbing them during filming?
 - What are the best practices to follow?
- Timing is everything:
 - Avoid the mating season for animals;
 - Avoid hibernation periods and areas;
 - Focus on times of low public use.

! *Sometimes, it is better to change the shooting schedule or location.*

- Keep the team small.
- Make the most of your time on site.
- Think about the weather and prepare for it.
- Clean equipment before the shoot to avoid using toxic products on site.
- Keep in touch with the local stakeholders to fine-tune the shoot according to issues encountered.
- Brief your team about the recommendations made and the seven “No Trace” principles.

2. Limit Noise Pollution

- Make as little noise as possible (avoid shouting or loud conversations so as not to disturb the animals) and limit the use of megaphones.
- Work with a small team to keep noise to a minimum.
- Use electric generators, which are quieter.
- Use quieter means of transport (electric or hybrid).
- Promote the use of quiet drones, and keep a respectable distance from animals to avoid disturbing them. Be mindful of the risk of collision with birds to avoid injuring them.
- Use images bank services for certain shots to reduce site visits (e.g., Playball Archives).

3. Limit Chemical Pollution

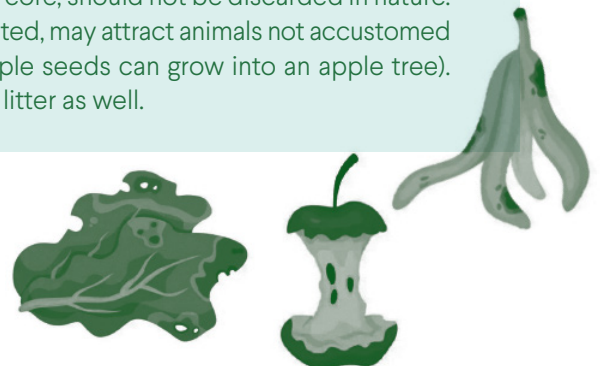
- Bring garbage, compost and recycling bags to avoid leaving anything behind.
- Avoid chemical and toxic products that could leach into the soil.
- Take care not to contaminate soil and water (with products, waste, etc.).
- Beware of the wind, which can spread toxic products and contaminate natural animal habitats.
- Avoid chemicals and food products with strong odours.
- Avoid aerosols and paint.
- Choose natural products and/or products with eco-responsible labels.
- Bring your garbage with you when you leave the site.
- Use dry toilets, if available, and don't leave toilet paper in nature.
- Use biodegradable soap and wash dishes at least 60 m away from streams. It is preferable to spread soiled water over a large area of vegetation.

4. Limit the Impacts of Your Presence

- Consider delimiting areas for traffic and access.
- Move along the marked trails and remain in the authorized areas (follow one another if trails are narrow).
- Keep equipment to a minimum and limit the use of heavy machinery.
- Limit travel and optimize transport.
- Refrain from eating at sensitive sites or moving food from one site to another.
- Pay close attention to fire hazards and remove all potential ignition sources. *To learn more about the right habits to adopt: <https://sopfeu.qc.ca/>.*
- Avoid generating odours that could disturb animals.
- Limit air pollution (chemicals, aerosols, smoke, etc.).
- Bring back waste and sort it.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Even compostable leftovers, such as a banana peel or an apple core, should not be discarded in nature. This type of waste often takes longer to decompose than expected, may attract animals not accustomed to this type of food, and can introduce foreign organisms (apple seeds can grow into an apple tree). Moreover, this kind of action could encourage other visitors to litter as well.



5. Limit Light Pollution

USEFUL INFORMATION

Light pollution is defined as the excessive, intrusive and disturbing use of artificial light at night. It disrupts natural light cycles, and therefore impacts fauna, flora and ecosystems (quebecoiseaux.org).

Artificial light can disturb certain animals, attract them, make them feel frightened or stressed, and trigger unusual behaviours such as taking more risks with their prey.

Recommendations

- Use anti-light pollution and/or night filters.
- Reduce the intensity and duration of lighting (in winter, low-intensity lighting prevents the snow from reflecting too much light towards the sky).
- Choose light wavelengths that reduce the impact on flora and fauna (red light).
- When possible, direct the lighting downwards to keep the illuminated area as small as possible.
- Schedule filming times around the habits of the animals (minimize disturbance).
- Optimize night-time shots.

6. Keep Your Distance from Wildlife

Human presence can greatly disrupt the activities of animals. By repeatedly disturbing and stressing them, we run the risk of changing their behaviour. Getting them used to the presence of humans can also make them less wary and more reckless, and lead them to lose their fear of humans, which can put them in danger.

- Do not feed animals.
- Stay at least 50 m away from medium-sized animals, and 100 m away from large ones.
- Keep food supplies, waste and other products with strong odours out of reach of animals.
- Respect the environment and wildlife.
- Do not pick plants, move rocks or even collect pieces of wood, as these are often useful to certain animals.
- Avoid disturbance during the sensitive periods of breeding, nesting and calf rearing, or during winter.
- If you wish to film animals, be sure to research the species and their personalities beforehand, and respect their habits and habitats.
 - For example, use drones to film from a greater distance to avoid disturbing them.
- Consult the Government of Canada's List of Wildlife Species at Risk.
- Refer to the regulations applicable to the territories filmed.



03 FURTHER READING CASE STUDIES

a. Magdalen Islands: An Example to Follow

The Magdalen Islands are a popular location for film shoots. Made up of a dozen islands, the archipelago faces a number of environmental challenges. Because of its insularity, the region faces a number of significant problems: waste management, for instance, and the considerable risk of dune erosion due to high winds and tides, which also pose a threat to flora and fauna.

That is why the *Association touristique régionale des Îles-de-la-Madeleine* and *community maritime* teamed up with *La Vague* to set up an environmental policy for film shoots. Now, every shoot must respect the Magdalen Islands' commitments to sustainable development.

The filming guide available on the site provides resources related to waste management and land protection. This approach raises awareness among the public and professionals who visit the region, and ensures that everyone is mindful of their impact. More broadly, the Magdalen Islands community has launched a whole campaign to highlight the importance of protecting the environment: **I care for you.**

To raise visitors' awareness, a number of vignettes have been produced, encouraging them to adopt more environmentally friendly behaviours. *For example: I care for Les Îles by respecting the fauna, the flora and the environment; I care for Les Îles by properly disposing of my garbage; I care for Les Îles by committing to the responsible use of energy and drinking water.*

b. Indigenous Screen Office Protocols and Resources

The Indigenous Screen Office supports and represents Indigenous communities and individuals in the narrative sovereignty of their stories, and contributes to the evolution of their representation and participation in the screen-based content production industry. It seeks to help them share their diverse stories and perspectives across all screen platforms.

The Indigenous Screen Office developed many protocols and resources to help integrate traditional practices and values into the contemporary way of doing things, and to raise awareness of the need to work within indigenous communities.

These protocols provide guidelines to work in a collaborative way with indigenous communities. The protocols are based on 4 main principles: **respect, reciprocity, responsibility and consent.**

The tools also give us a better understanding of the impact that films have **on communities from a social, environmental and economic standpoint**: *What impact do I have on this community? Is this impact positive or negative? How am I responsible?*

“Successful collaboration means that indigenous communities become involved earlier in the production process, that they help in telling their own stories by playing a key creative role in the projects. This requires building trust and maintaining strong links within the community.”

(Indigenous Screen Office)

Resources

- **On-Screen Protocols & Pathways:**
A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories
- **Considerations for Filming in Community**
- **Sensitizing Non-Indigenous Crew**

Additional resources are also available: on-set protocols, budget, coproductions, etc. The ISO also maintains a database of indigenous audiovisual talent.

Essential

It is essential to get in touch with the band council of the territory’s indigenous community before filming. This ensures an effective sharing of information and establishes a relationship of trust, based on respect for the needs and knowledge of the local populations.

By collaborating with the guardians of the area, you can adjust your activities according to the local values regarding respect for nature and traditional lands.

USEFUL INFORMATION

There are three distinct Indigenous peoples in Canada: Inuit, Métis, and First Nations; with 50-odd individual nations, well over 600 First Nations reserves, four Inuit regions, eight constitutionally protected Métis settlements, and, according to Statistics Canada, 60 Indigenous languages. As such there are as many varying nation, territorial, and community protocols. These include cultural and territorial protocols, ways of giving and receiving traditional knowledge, practices of gifting, and political protocols with established governments (whether they be Indian Act bands, self-governing entities, or national and provincial organizations such as the Métis Nation of Ontario).

– Excerpt from *On-Screen Protocols & Pathways* by the Indigenous Screen Office

CONCLUSION

LEARN MORE

about the best practices to adopt: ask questions, contact your peers, share your successes! The more you learn about eco-responsible production, the more you can limit your impact.

TOOLS

The Rolling Green program provides a number of tools, resources and studies to help industry players carry out their ecological transition.

Get all the information you need on the Rolling Green website and sign up for the newsletter!

- Any questions? Contact us at info@ontournevert.com.
- To make sure you do not miss anything, follow Rolling Green on social media: [@ontournevert/rollinggreen](https://www.instagram.com/ontournevert/rollinggreen)



Get your
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ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

Our other Rolling green tools

- Best practice guide for shoots
- Best practice guide for animation and visual effects studios
- Guide to eco-responsible costumes
- ABC of the ecoresponsible producer

Commitment charter

Report about on-screen eco-gestures

Eco-responsible supplier directory

Environmental protection associations

- Leave No Trace Canada
- Nature-Action Québec
- Nature Québec
- Canada Parks and Wilderness Society, Quebec (CPAWS)
- AQOCI

Indigenous audiovisual production resources

- Indigenous Screen Office
- Wapikoni
- Indigenous cinema - NFB
- Radio Canada - Espaces autochtones

Complementary resources

- Sustainable development toolbox from the Conseil québécois du loisir
- Example of a digital sobriety policy
- Programmed obsolescence - Équiterre report
- For proper material recycling - “Ça va où?” app.
- Équiterre
- Mangez Québec - Reducing your meal's carbon footprint
- Stop planned obsolescence
- Climate fresk
- Carbon offsetting : Carbone Boréal - Carbon footprint calculation