

SAIL 2025
AMSTERDAM



IMPACT REPORT

**UNITED
BY WAVES**





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THE ESSENCE

With 2.5 million visitors, a global reach of over 3 billion, more than 200 program elements, and crew members from 150 nationalities, SAIL once again became the largest event in the Netherlands, and, in terms of online reach, the largest ever. For five days, ships, crews, and visitors from around the world came together in a celebration of connection on water and shore, creating a unique platform to test new initiatives, partnerships, and innovations.

This impact report brings together SAIL's initiatives, partnerships and innovations, highlighting its impact on sustainability, inclusion, and talent development. By using SAIL as a living lab in public space, SAIL generated insights relevant for cities, ports, governments, the private sector and the international event industry.

Events act as a window to society. Their scale creates pressure on urban systems, but also allows for collaboration, data collection and real-time feedback. Clear deadlines accelerate action, flexible permits enable experimentation, and millions of visitors provide insightful data, turning events into powerful testing grounds for real-world solutions.

During SAIL 2025, we brought the world to Amsterdam. We showed that water connects rather than divides. Through initiatives and partnerships SAIL became more accessible for a wider audience, expanding who can participate and benefit from the event.

Young professionals from the SAIL Academy brought fresh ideas into the organisation, while #SAILHeroes experienced life on a Tall Ship and developed skills that will stay with them for life.

By working towards a more sustainable production and testing innovations across water, energy, data, mobility, materials and food, SAIL 2025 reinforced its commitment to a sustainable future.

SAIL 2025 didn't just host an event, it made waves. By opening our port and turning the city into a living lab, we built new alliances and tested ideas that ripple beyond the port. United by shared challenges, collaboration and a belief in meaningful change, we sail together.





UNITED BY WAVES

SAIL shows the true power of water: it connects, unites, and brings us closer together. Every 5 years, Amsterdam opens its port to ships, crews and visitors from all over the globe. During SAIL, it is as tangible as ever: the sea does not divide, it unites us.

In preparation for the 2025 edition, SAIL set course towards port harnessing our platform for good, intentionally creating positive impact across a wide array of subjects and building a strong community to achieve its goals. With a strong focus on sustainability, inclusion, and talent development, SAIL has connected communities and industries. We create new horizons, sail together, and empower wavemakers.

This impact report reflects the progress we have made together with our partners in shaping a future-proof and intentional edition of SAIL. It showcases the wave we have created and how the ripple effect of the catalyst that we call SAIL had an effect on the city, port, region, and our partners. We recognize that we are not there yet, but we have firmly set sail in the right direction.

We are all United by Waves.



A TRIPLE ANNIVERSARY THAT WARMED THE HEARTS OF MANY. IT'S INSPIRING THAT SO MANY 'WAVEMAKERS' MADE SAIL POSSIBLE—AND, AS THIS IMPACT REPORT SHOWS, ELEVATED IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL



MITRA VAN RAALTEN
Executive Director, SAIL



THE STRENGTH OF SAIL LIES IN ITS UNIQUE COLLABORATIONS AND NETWORK. PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, COMPANIES, AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE NOT ONLY MADE IT POSSIBLE, BUT HAVE ALSO CO-DESIGNED IT. IN THIS WAY, SAIL HAS GROWN INTO A LIVING LAB IN WHICH PARTNERS LEARN TOGETHER AND BUILD INNOVATIONS THAT CONTINUE TO PROVE THEIR VALUE LONG AFTER THE EVENT.



ROBERT VISSER
Executive Director, SAIL





THERE WAS AN UNPRECEDENTED ATMOSPHERE IN THE CITY. WITH SAIL, AMSTERDAM SHOWED ITSELF AT ITS VERY BEST.



FEMKE HALSEMA

Mayor, Municipality of Amsterdam

SAIL BRINGS TOGETHER PEOPLE, GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND THE MARITIME SECTOR, STIMULATES THE LOCAL ECONOMY, STRENGTHENS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INSPIRES YOUNG AND OLD WITH MARITIME TRADITIONS. SAIL IS THE FLAGSHIP EVENT REPRESENTING THE REGION AND CONTRIBUTES TO PRIDE, COLLABORATION AND INNOVATION.



ARTHUR VAN DIJK

King's Commissioner, Province of North Holland





SAIL WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION OF OUR VALUED PARTNERS.

Our hosting partners, the Municipality of Amsterdam and Port of Amsterdam, enabled us to open the Amsterdam port and welcome millions of visitors to SAIL 2025.

Our presenting partners contributed as follows: RTL supported SAIL's extensive media reach; Booking.com supported hackathons for young professionals and sponsored a concert night; Heineken sponsored a concert night and provided SAIL with marketing value and the Float-In; Sligro organised a large customer event and catered the hospitality fleet; Tommy Hilfiger outfitted the volunteers; Verpact supported waste reduction with bulk deposit machines and the Float-In; Heren2 provided office space; and KPN ensured event connectivity.

Our supporting partners made key contributions: Capgemini enabled the innovation programme and SAIL Summit; Clifford Chance provided legal support; Damen opened its dock to visitors; Provincie Noord-Holland supported communication and the sustainability, inclusion and talent development programme lines; and RAI improved accessibility for visitors outside Amsterdam.

Contributing partners Bourgonje, BNext, CM.com, DVC, The Support Group, Stelz, JMT Management, MTD, Ocean, Randstad, Vaarvignet, Vattenfall, and Waternet supported a safe, efficient and sustainable event. Together with our social impact partners, GVB, GGD, KPN Mooiste Contactfonds, HandicapNL, Superkracht and Hidden Disabilities Foundation, we created a SAIL where everyone felt welcome and could participate.

Our suppliers, Compass Group, PD Solutions, GSES, Koninklijke Oostenrijk Groep, Meinders Catering, Webbers, Intersettle, Catering Culinair, and Menken, delivered essential event services.

Finally, we thank our **family members** for their vital role within SAIL: Port of Amsterdam, ROC van Amsterdam-Flevoland, Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Provincie Noord-Holland, the municipalities of Zaanstad, Beverwijk, Haarlemmermeer, Velsen and IJmuiden, Hogeschool Inholland, the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Municipality of Amsterdam, and the Watersportverbond.



OUR PARTNERS

HOSTING PARTNERS



SUPPORTING PARTNERS



CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS



SOCIAL IMPACT PARTNERS



SUPPLIERS



FAMILY MEMBERS





01

SETTING THE COURSE



SETTING THE COURSE

Large-scale events like SAIL reflect society and serve as a powerful living lab, highlighting both challenges and opportunities in a time of climate change, inequality, and polarization. As a networked organization, SAIL, together with its essential partners, has created collective impact through its three program lines. Leveraging its international platform, SAIL focuses on sustainability (SAIL Horizons), inclusion (SAIL Together), and talent development (SAIL Talent). With a strong emphasis on community building and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), SAIL and over 50 key partners have worked collaboratively to advance its ambitions across all three program lines.

SAIL is all about connecting: the event brings together ship crews from around the world, visitors, and the people of Amsterdam. The ambition is an event where everyone feels welcome and can participate in their own way. SAIL 2025 marked important first steps towards greater inclusion and stronger human connection.

For over a decade, SAIL has also invested in future professionals. Through partnerships with educational institutions and hands-on learning aboard Tall Ships, young people are given space to grow their talents and shape their future. By implementing targeted actions aimed at making SAIL's production more sustainable, and launching an innovation and knowledge programme, SAIL reinforced its commitment to sustainability. Together with partners, the event aimed to reduce its CO₂ footprint, worked towards minimising waste and tested new ways of working—using SAIL as a living lab to generate insights for more sustainable cities and communities.

However, the impact of SAIL's efforts was measured for the first time in 2025. Due to the event's large scale, unique nature, and the lack of previous data, it is challenging to directly assess results or make comparisons with past editions. For this reason, this impact report presents an initial attempt to establish a baseline measurement for SAIL 2025, providing insight into the current situation and guiding future opportunities.



SHIRIT BRANDWIJK
Strategic Advisor Sustainability,
Port of Amsterdam

“THROUGH THE COLLABORATIONS THAT DEVELOP BEFORE AND DURING SAIL, KNOWLEDGE IS EXCHANGED, INCLUDING WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS. THE SHARED GOALS AND TEAMWORK FOSTER STRONGER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN US AND VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS, WHICH IN TURN PROVE VALUABLE IN OTHER PROJECTS AS WELL.”





02

SETTING SAIL FOR IMPACT



SETTING SAIL FOR IMPACT

2.1 MODEL FOR CHANGE

To formulate a strategic roadmap toward the goals of sustainability, inclusion and talent development of SAIL, the Theory of Change model was used. The Theory of Change outlines how specific interventions are expected to create change - showing how inputs and activities lead to outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact.

Inputs: Resources that drive SAIL's sustainability efforts—such as the fleet, volunteers, suppliers, partners, and innovative practices.

Activities: Key actions like promoting plant-based food, and providing sensory retreat rooms for visitors.

Outputs: Immediate results, such as a certain percentage of drinks sourced locally and a heightened involvement of young professionals.

This Theory of Change defined SAIL's path to making waves, anchoring meaningful environmental and social benefits. **Without any quantitative or qualitative data to represent the impact of the edition of 2015 and before, the use of this model was imperative.**

Outcomes: Medium-term effects such as lower transport emissions and a more accessible and welcoming event for all types of visitors.

Impacts: Long-term contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION AND INSIGHTS

Grounded in its Theory of Change, SAIL adopted a mixed-methods approach to measure impact. This recognises that impact must be assessed holistically: by maximising positive contributions while also identifying and reducing negative effects. Together with GSES*, SAIL set targets that reflect this balance. Impact measurement was organised into three categories:

Category 1: assessment of partners' sustainability commitments using the GSES meta standard, establishing a baseline across six pillars based on existing certifications (including CSR, GHG reduction and biodiversity) to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Category 2: measurement of event-level impact across Sustainability, Inclusion and Talent Development, based on predefined targets.

Category 3: narrative analysis of innovation projects and their contribution to the SDGs.

**Global Sustainable Enterprise System (GSES) A company that supports organizations in measuring, managing, and improving their sustainability performance.*

“SUSTAINABILITY STARTS WITH HAVING THE COURAGE TO LOOK AT YOUR OWN IMPACT AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT. BY MEASURING AND IMPROVING TRANSPARENTLY, SAIL SETS A NEW STANDARD FOR EVENTS WORLDWIDE. AT GSES, WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE SUPPORTED THIS MOVEMENT.”



KELLY RUIGROK
CEO, GSES



Where possible, SAIL defined ambitious, quantifiable goals, seen not as endpoints but as milestones on a continuous journey of improvement on all three program lines. To do so, known (inter)national standards, previous editions of SAIL and experiences from partners and/or other events were used.

By formulating our sustainability, inclusion and talent development goals using, amongst others, Green Events Sustainability Ladder for Events, insights from partners and suppliers, and by aligning our challenges with those of the municipality, governmental bodies, we identified the most impactful way forward.

SAIL HORIZONS

ENERGY

100% renewable event energy
(excluding mobility and nautical transport)

MATERIALS

60% of procured materials reused or recycled/biobased;
85% of event materials reused or recycled at high value.

MOBILITY

90% sustainable travel by participants; 50% sustainable on-site transport; 80% of fleet using HVO100.

FOOD & BEVERAGE

Maximum footprint of 1 kg CO₂ per dish (0.5 kg by 2030);
at least 50% of beverages produced in the Netherlands.

WATER

100% renewable event energy
(excluding mobility and nautical transport)

To track performance, SAIL developed quantitative indicators and collected data in close collaboration with coordinators, internal teams and external suppliers across energy, materials, mobility, food & beverage and water.

SAIL TOGETHER

ENABLING PARTICIPATION FOR ALL DURING SAIL, INCLUDING YOUNGER AUDIENCES, AND WORKING TOWARDS AN EVENT, CULTURAL PROGRAMMING, AND CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS THAT REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.

SAIL TALENT

2.5K

PARTICIPANTS

through SAIL Academy in preparation of and during SAIL 2025

350

PARTICIPANTS

through SAIL Academy in preparation of and during SAIL 2025



2.3 THE JOURNEY AND THE DATA

Effective impact measurement starts with early stakeholder engagement, especially within a complex supplier network. SAIL's approach followed three steps:

1. **Defining and scoping measurements aligned with programme lines and targets.**
2. **Engaging suppliers and partners to collect consistent data.**
3. **Aggregating and analysing data for carbon footprint calculations and performance assessment.**

Supplier data was collected via standardised templates and converted into material use, energy use and carbon emissions using recognised emission factors. On-site data, such as visitor counts, was gathered by volunteers, while surveys and interviews provided qualitative insights.

Additionally, independent auditing was deployed by means of comparing the goals and agreements with suppliers and partners beforehand to the actual status quo during and after the event. Evidence was gathered by a team of Green Guards and an independent auditor.

FACTS AND FIGURES →

Together, this data formed the basis for both the carbon emission calculation and the evaluation of progress against targets on inclusion and talent development. The resulting baseline now serves as a learning framework to guide improvement across future editions. By sharing insights transparently, SAIL aims to support learning not only within the organisation, but also across partners, municipalities and the wider event sector.





KEY FIGURES

VISITORS

2.5M

MEDIA
REACH

3.15B

ECONOMICAL
IMPACT

€120M+

INDISPENSABLE
PARTNERS

50+

TALL
SHIPS

45

DUTCH HERITAGE
SHIPS

650

DUTCH SAILING
SHIPS

120

INNOVATION
SHIPS

15

ROYAL NETHERLANDS
NAVY SHIPS

3

NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED
BY SHIPS' CREW

150

PRIVATELY
OWNED BOATS

10K+

SAIL
VOLUNTEERS

2.5K

YOUNG
TALENTS

4.4K

PARTICIPANTS IN SAIL
TOGETHER BOAT TOURS

5.4K

SAILING IN THE
SAIL KIDS CLUB

15.5K

BOAT TRIPS
& TICKETS

125K

PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SAIL
SUMMIT

250

PARTICIPANTS
IN THE SAIL
DIALOGUE SESSIONS

120

CORPORATE
HOSPITALITY
PACKAGES

40K

B2B PARTICIPANTS
SAIL HORIZONS
BACKSTAGE TOUR

150



To assess the satisfaction of our visitors, a questionnaire was held with 2.482 respondents (from which 22% are living in Amsterdam, 21% living in the Metropolitan area of Amsterdam and 57% out of other parts of the Netherlands). Average mean score of event of...

8.8/10

(a very impressive result for a freely accessible event). No individual scores of reviewed aspects of the event were below 8.2/10. A mix of representative age groups visited SAIL.

93%

felt the event created a special atmosphere in the city

92%

appreciated that SAIL takes place in Amsterdam

91%

believed the event showcased the city in a unique way

80%

said it made them proud that SAIL is hosted in the capital

90%

felt safe and free to be themselves

83%

felt at home during their visit

50%

met new people





03

SAIL TOGETHER



SAIL TOGETHER

Inclusion and diversity were key priorities for SAIL 2025. By working closely with social impact partners: HandicapNL*, GGD*, GVB*, KPN Mooiste Contactfonds*, Superkracht* and Hidden Disabilities Sunflower*, SAIL expanded who could participate in and benefit from the event. Together, these collaborations translated ambition into tangible impact. In the following chapters, the projects that were implemented and their measured impact are presented. Additionally, diverse and inclusive programming was developed to engage various target audiences. These initiatives contribute to SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities; SDG 11 Sustainable Cities; SDG 16 Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions.

3.1 SITDOWN CAFÉ

Where SAIL stands

SAIL aimed to move beyond physical accessibility and actively foster social inclusion. The goal was to create welcoming public spaces where visitors could participate in their own way, lowering social barriers and encouraging connection.

Making Waves

Together with HandicapNL and Buutvrij, SAIL hosted the Sitdown Café: a modular, inclusive space where people with and without disabilities could meet, dance and connect. With features such as a wheelchair-height bar, Braille menus and a mixed-ability team, the café welcomed 2,400–2,800 visitors over 32 hours—around 10% with visible disabilities, close to real societal representation.

Visitors rated the experience 9.4/10, while many more engaged from the sidelines.

The Sitdown Café showed that meaningful inclusion is possible even when full accessibility cannot be guaranteed in public spaces, and its participation set a new benchmark for inclusive events. Key lessons on early collaboration and communication will be carried forward in HandicapNL's Accessible Festivals programme.

*HandicapNL: Dutch non-profit supporting inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities. | *GGD: The Netherlands' local public health service. *GVB: Amsterdam's public transport operator. | *KPN Mooiste Contactfonds: KPN's social fund supporting connection and social inclusion. | *Superkracht: Dutch initiative empowering organisations to involve volunteers with mental or physical disabilities. | *Hidden Disabilities Sunflower: International program raising awareness of non-visible disabilities.



“SAIL SHOWED THAT IT’S POSSIBLE: A UNIFYING CELEBRATION WHERE EVERYONE FEELS WELCOME! THE SITDOWN CAFÉ BECAME THE GOZIEST SPOT, WHERE ALL GUESTS COULD ENJOY THEMSELVES TOGETHER ON THE SAME LEVEL.”



EVA EIKHOUT

Ambassador, SAIL Together





3.2 SAIL TOGETHER BOAT TOURS

Where SAIL stands

SAIL brings people together, but access to its most iconic experience, being on the water, is not accessible for everyone. Since 2015, the SAIL Together boat tours have addressed this by offering inclusive sailing experiences to people who might otherwise be excluded.

In 2025, the initiative expanded significantly in partnership with the KPN Mooiste Contactfonds, reaching a more diverse audience, including families living in poverty, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ seniors, refugees and people experiencing homelessness.

Making Waves

Through the SAIL Together boat tours, 5,400 visitors from 54 social organisations experienced SAIL from the water, supported by over 600 KPN volunteers. The initiative highlighted the power of corporate volunteering and showed how inclusion can be a natural part of large public events. Looking ahead, the focus shifts from scale to lasting impact, with follow-up research capturing the emotional and social value for both visitors and volunteers, ensuring that the sense of connection created during SAIL continues beyond the event.

3.3 SENSORY RETREAT ROOMS

Where SAIL stands

In preparation for SAIL 2025, HandicapNL advised on practical accessibility measures, from wheelchair-accessible toilets to facilities that allow visitors to experience the event in their own way. Together, SAIL and HandicapNL paid specific attention to visitors who may need moments of calm, such as older adults or people with a neurodiverse background. For many, large-scale events can quickly become overwhelming.

Making Waves

To meet this need, four sensory retreat rooms were introduced at SAIL, staffed by trained volunteers from HandicapNL. These spaces offered visitors a place to rest and recharge, enabling them to stay longer and enjoy the event in a more relaxed way. HandicapNL's expertise ensured the rooms were not only accessible, but also genuinely calming in design and atmosphere.

Creating quiet spaces within a busy, high-traffic event presented challenges, particularly around visibility and spatial planning. For future editions, clearer communication and on-site wayfinding could further improve access.

Both SAIL and HandicapNL view the sensory retreat rooms as a valuable addition. They demonstrated that accessibility is not only about physical access, but also about comfort and well-being—and that even in the midst of a lively event, moments of calm can make a meaningful difference.





3.4 EMOTIONAL SAFETY

Where SAIL stands

Large public events face specific challenges around social and emotional safety. Visitors may experience inappropriate behaviour, conflicts, or simply need a moment of calm or someone to talk to. As SAIL takes place in an open public space, dynamic and unpredictable, providing appropriate care requires a different approach. To strengthen emotional safety, SAIL partnered with the GGD, the Dutch public health service operating at the municipal level.

Making Waves

In collaboration with the GGD, SAIL 2025 introduced Anchor Teams: trained staff offering an approachable point for support, reporting concerns or having a conversation. Their human presence complemented security and first aid, adding an extra layer of social safety. This marked the first time Anchor Teams operated at a free public event, with clear roles and close coordination with safety and medical services. The pilot delivered valuable insights for improving social safety at large-scale events and other public spaces.

The GGD deployed seven teams, five stationary and two mobile, supported by around 100 staff. Although only one incident was reported, the teams' visibility increased feelings of safety and trust among visitors, crew and volunteers. They provided first response and referred people to partners such as the police, HandicapNL's sensory retreat rooms and, where needed, the GGD's Centre for Sexual Violence.

For the GGD, SAIL served as a learning ground for integrating public health into high-traffic environments. Key lessons included the importance of earlier coordination, clearer visibility and signage, and sufficient on-site capacity. Looking ahead, events like SAIL offer strong opportunities to embed care, safety and public health into everyday public life, strengthening inclusive and resilient communities.

3.5 IEDEREEN AAN BOORD

Where SAIL stands

SAIL aims to be an event for everyone—but that only works when people can reach the event area. As public transport is essential for moving around the city and event area, SAIL partnered with GVB, the public transport provider in Amsterdam, to improve accessibility and inclusivity for crew, volunteers and visitors.

Making Waves

As Amsterdam's public transport provider, GVB played a crucial role during SAIL 2025, facilitating an estimated 500,000 passenger movements per day and forming the backbone of sustainable mobility. The long-standing partnership between SAIL and GVB reflects a shared commitment to accessibility and sustainability.

To encourage low-emission travel, 12,000 free SAIL travel passes were distributed to staff, crew and volunteers. Actual use remained limited, with 5,570 registered trips. Likely explanations include, in particular for the volunteers that live in Amsterdam, easy

car parking at some locations, walking or cycling being the preferred option or faster, and free ferries not requiring check-ins and therefore going unrecorded.

SAIL and GVB also explored reduced fares for Stadspas holders. A Stadspas is a municipal card that gives eligible residents discounts and benefits for local services and activities. Although not realised due to time constraints, this remains a promising opportunity for future editions. Earlier planning and clearer communication could significantly increase uptake of both travel passes and inclusive measures.

GVB's involvement at SAIL 2025 shows how mobility providers shape not only logistics, but also the sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity of major cultural events in the city.



3.6 SAIL FOR ALL

Where SAIL stands

In 2025, SAIL strengthened its focus on inclusion by widening who participates in and benefits from the event. As a major public platform, SAIL embraced its social responsibility, using the cultural programme to spark dialogue on diversity, inequality and shared history, including the Netherlands' colonial and slavery past. Additionally, the event focussed on diversifying a group of people the event cannot do without: the many volunteers that help make the event possible.

Making waves

Through partnerships, SAIL created tangible pathways for accessibility, workforce diversity and equitable participation. The event would not have been possible without the commitment of 2.500 volunteers, who formed the heart of SAIL. Together with Randstad and Superkracht, SAIL engaged approximately 410 volunteers with a distance to the labour market, offering meaningful work experience at Amsterdam's largest public event. Additionally, thanks to the support of Tommy Hilfiger, all volunteers were provided with stylish and recognizable outfits.

To support people with non-visible disabilities, SAIL partnered with the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower. 4,500 sunflower pins were worn by volunteers and crew, supported by training videos to build awareness and encourage inclusive interaction.

Accessibility ambassador Eva Eikhout amplified this message as a Wavemaker, while Sit-Down Cafés and sensory retreat rooms created calm, welcoming spaces. Cultural programming expanded beyond maritime heritage and the ships of SAIL 2025 to reach younger and more diverse audiences:



A large floating art installation by **Jimmy Nelson** celebrated the cultural backgrounds of visiting Tall Ships, connecting Amsterdam with the world



Armazoen, a cinematic installation, invited reflection and dialogue on transatlantic slavery.



The **Changing Currents** programme, in collaboration with Melkweg and Het Scheepvaartmuseum, explored heritage and historical narratives



Het Scheepvaartmuseum opened its doors free of charge during SAIL, welcoming **29,000** visitors.



For the first time, the crew book included a pink page highlighting Amsterdam's acceptance of queer communities.



The **SAIL Kids Club** enabled **15,500** children to experience sailing in a safe and engaging way.



“SAIL IS A TRIBUTE TO JOURNEYS, REFUGE, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE. THROUGH MY ARTWORK WAVES AROUND THE WORLD, I WAS HONORED TO CONTRIBUTE POWERFUL, LARGE-SCALE PORTRAITS—AN ODE TO ALL THE CULTURES THAT AMSTERDAM WELCOMED DURING SAIL 2025.”



JIMMY NELSON
Renowned artist & photographer



SAIL 2025 made clear progress in embedding diversity, equity and inclusion into event design, partnerships and volunteering. Future editions can build on this by allocating dedicated budgets, strengthening awareness and communication, and improving measurement through targeted surveys and visitor feedback, ensuring that SAIL truly remains an event for all.



SAIL TALENT

04



SAIL TALENT

SAIL is more than a place to connect—it is a school for learning. Organising an event of this scale requires many disciplines, much like building a city. By working with young people and future professionals, SAIL has been developing talent for over a decade, while connecting them to the transformative power of the sea.

“DURING THE WONDERFUL SAIL EVENT, PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL STUDENTS JOIN FORCES. THEY CAN DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS AND ARE PART OF A LARGE EVENT WHERE UNITY AND CONNECTION TAKE CENTER STAGE. THERE IS NO BETTER REAL-WORLD LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR YOUNG TALENTS THAN THIS.”

BEA BECHT

Hogeschool Inholland



4.1 SAIL ACADEMY

Where sail stands

Since the founding of SAIL Academy in 2014, more than **4400 young professionals** were involved at the SAIL organisation by bridging the gap between education and practice and involving students directly in the preparation and delivery of SAIL. Through internships, hackathons and curriculum-based projects in collaboration with practical and theoretical educational institutes, students gain hands-on experience at one of the world’s largest maritime events, while contributing fresh ideas and perspectives. In close collaboration with educational partners ROC van Amsterdam–

Flevoland and Hogeschool Inholland, students from a wide range of disciplines took part in the preparation of and operation during SAIL 2025. No field was too unconventional to play a role. For SAIL, this collaboration strengthened creativity and innovation; for students, it offered a dynamic learning environment at international scale.

Making Waves

In preparation of SAIL 2025, **2,800 young talents** were involved through the SAIL Academy, contributing across operations, communications, inclusion and sustainability. **500 students** contributed during SAIL 2025.

A post-event survey among 75 students showed strong learning outcomes:

74%

Reported significant growth in collaboration skills



65%

Improved in handling work pressure and setting priorities



77%

Learned to apply feedback more effectively, while many strengthened communication and presentation skills



Students valued working under pressure, managing complex projects and collaborating in diverse teams, skills directly transferable to professional life. While the average overall rating of the experience was 6.5/10, nearly 60% said it helped them better understand how academic knowledge applies in practice, and 40% saw clear value for their future studies or careers.

The SAIL Academy proved a powerful learning lab, fostering responsibility, teamwork and professional confidence. Some students noted that the short project timeframe limited deeper engagement, an important lesson for future editions. Beyond the Academy itself, SAIL 2025 also inspired impact elsewhere: 1,600 new recruits registered with the Royal Netherlands Navy following their visit to SAIL, marking a significant success for maritime talent development.



4.2 #SAILHERO

Where SAIL stands

To share the transformative experience of life at sea with young people seeking personal growth, SAIL launched #SAILHero. During ten-day voyages aboard the Tall Ships IRIS, participants became full members of the crew, standing watch, cooking, hoisting sails and scrubbing decks. At sea, everyone counts. Responsibility is shared, and no one can be missed.

Guided by experienced coaches and the ship's permanent crew, participants learned to overcome fears, push boundaries and build confidence. The mix of hands-on teamwork and personal coaching helped many return ashore with stronger self-belief, social skills and a renewed sense of direction.

Supported by Stichting Janivo, VSBfonds, the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Province of North Holland and Fonds21, #SAILHero showed how the sea can be both a classroom and a mirror—offering young people new insights, lasting connections and a fresh perspective on life.

Making Waves

The impact of #SAILHero is measured through participant surveys and coach observations after each voyage, capturing both tangible outcomes and personal growth.

Participants board with clear, often deeply personal goals: taking responsibility, speaking up, overcoming fears, breaking habits or building self-confidence. For many, the journey

is about stepping out of their comfort zone and discovering new strengths.

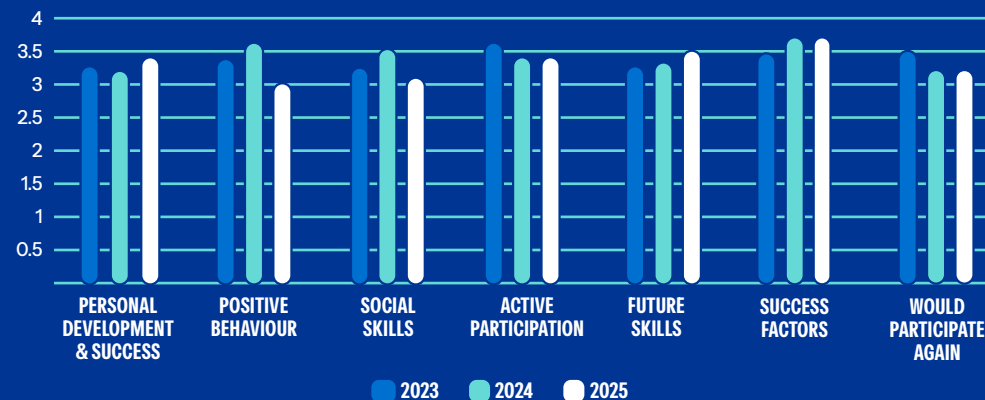
Between 2023 and 2025, 150 young people took part in #SAILHero across multiple voyages (40 in 2023, 60 in 2024 and 50 in 2025). While financial constraints prevented reaching the original ambition of 350 participants, each #SAILHero returned changed. Post-voyage self-assessments, using a 1–4 scale, show development across personal growth, behaviour, social skills and future orientation.

Overall, self-assessments from the 150 #SAILHero participants show a highly positive experience. Participants developed new skills, strengthened social abilities and gained tools that support their future. The programme fostered personal growth, lasting memories and strong new friendships.

Looking ahead, SAIL is exploring #SAILHero 2.0: a next step that continues to harness the power of sea and sailing, while offering more intensive follow-up support on shore to help embed these gains in a lasting way.



AVERAGE PARTICIPANT RATING: #SAILHERO



“IT WAS A FANTASTIC JOURNEY WHERE I LEARNED A LOT AND DEVELOPED AN INTEREST IN SAILING. I’D LOVE TO VOLUNTEER ON A TRIP LIKE THIS OR EVEN JOIN AGAIN AS A PARTICIPANT.”



ANONYMOUS
Participant



05

SAIL HORIZONS



SAIL HORIZONS

To harness the power of SAIL 2025 and contribute to challenges the Netherlands, Amsterdam and beyond face on sustainability, SAIL developed a dedicated sustainability programme: SAIL Horizons.

In collaboration with the Municipality of Amsterdam, the Province of North Holland and Capgemini, the following initiatives were delivered:

1. More sustainable production, aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions and minimising waste.

2. An innovation programme across six themes: water, energy, data-driven event management, mobility, materials and food & drink, positioning SAIL as a living lab with public and private partners. Focused on implementing or testing solutions in the event that add to relevant knowledge for public and private partners in their journey towards sustainability.

3. A knowledge programme, including two dialogue sessions ahead of SAIL and a summit during the event to enhance community building, and share knowledge on sustainability and innovation across all layers of SAIL's partnerships.

4. SAIL Horizons, an inspiring outdoor exposition about sustainability and innovation for visitors and partners during SAIL 2025.

5. Behind-the-scenes tours for partners and international delegations showcasing interventions and innovations.

6. This impact report, sharing outcomes and lessons learned across all three programme lines.

This following section presents the first-ever measurement of SAIL's CO₂ impact in a carbon hotspot analysis, followed by key insights into sustainable production measures and tested innovations.

5.1 CO₂ IMPACT | OUR CARBON HOTSPOT ANALYSIS

The 2025 edition of SAIL brought together millions of visitors, over 10,000 ships, and a wide range of programming and hospitality activities. To understand the environmental impact of this large-scale, multi-day event, a carbon footprint assessment was conducted across all major operational domains. The assessment covers direct and indirect emissions from mobility, energy, water, food and beverages, materials and waste, nautical activities, and selected programme elements.

During the process of collecting data for the carbon footprint analysis, SAIL encountered many challenges. Due to the scale and publicly accessible nature of the event, the absence of a comparable event for extrapolation, the involvement of hundreds of (sub)suppliers, and the high level of complexity involved in organising the event, our first attempt to measure SAIL's CO₂ footprint did not result in a fully comprehensive overview.

Please see section 6.4 for our consideration and data gaps. The data we were able to collect and analyse did, however, lead to a hotspot analysis, providing insight into the parts of SAIL's organisation where the largest amounts of CO₂ are emitted. These insights, together with the lessons learned throughout this process of measurement, will serve as key input for the design of our 2030 sustainability strategy.

Additionally, the lessons learned during this process are relevant for the event industry, port, municipalities and governmental organisations.

“THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED BY SAIL AND THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM BY IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN PREPARATION OF AND DURING THE EVENT ADDS SIGNIFICANT VALUE IN EXPLORING HOW THESE INNOVATIONS CAN SHAPE A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE CITY.”



MINOUCHE CRAMER

Head of Innovation,
Municipality of Amsterdam



The total calculated carbon footprint of SAIL 2025 amounts to 13,618 tonnes CO₂e, reflecting all emission sources for which data was available and verifiable at the time of reporting.

Visitor mobility is by far the largest contributor. With an estimated **2.5 million visitors**, travel to and from the event accounted for **12,424 tonnes CO₂e**, mainly from car and public transport use. These estimates are based on modelling using the SAIL App Travel Suggestion tool, incorporating postal codes, modal split and travel distances.

Nautical mobility formed the second-largest source, with **572 tonnes CO₂e**, based on reported and corrected fuel-use data, including both diesel and HVO100 across ship categories.

Food and beverages contributed **471.7 tonnes CO₂e**, covering public catering (with some extrapolation due to incomplete reporting), B2B hospitality, crew meals and beverages. Public catering represents the largest share within this category and also carries the greatest uncertainty.

Materials and waste together contributed 127.6 tonnes CO₂e, comprising 83.68 tonnes CO₂e from merchandise, signage and event dressing, and 43.9 tonnes CO₂e from waste processing. In total, 146 tonnes of waste were measured across multiple material streams and treatment pathways.

Programming activities, specifically fireworks and the aviation fly-by, added **47.6 tonnes CO₂e**—a relatively small but high-intensity contribution.

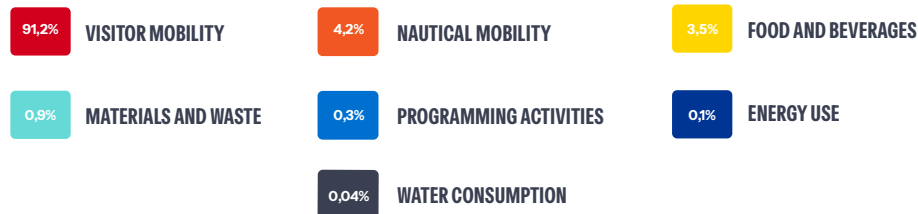
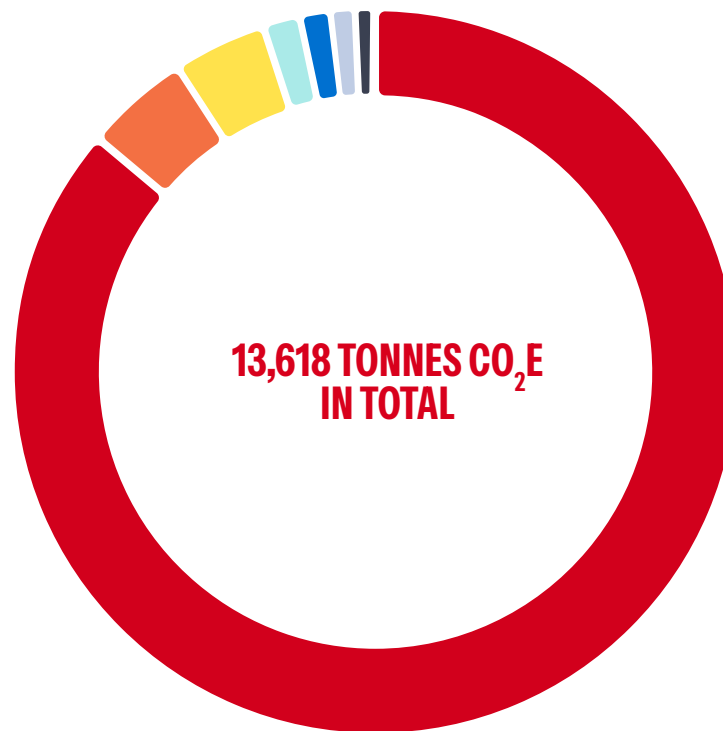
Energy use resulted in **9.259 tonnes CO₂e**, primarily from HVO100 used in generators and the SAIL Villages. Electricity from grid connections and shore power was fully backed by Guarantees of Origin and therefore counted as zero-emission supply.

Water consumption, including drinking water, greywater and bottled water, accounted for **5.093 tonnes CO₂e**, with bottled water responsible for most emissions due to upstream production impacts.

On a per-visitor basis, attending SAIL 2025 resulted in an average footprint of approximately **1.1 kg CO₂e per person per day** - a considerably low number, resulting from a lack of data rather than a true representation of sustainability efforts.

The carbon hotspot analysis underscores a clear insight: **visitor mobility dominates the overall emissions profile**, followed by nautical mobility and food and beverages. While renewable energy sourcing, recycled materials and reuse of signage significantly reduced direct emissions, the open and city-wide nature of SAIL means visitor travel remains the largest determinant of total impact.

CO₂ HOTSPOT ANALYSIS





To add to the creation of a more sustainable edition of SAIL in 2030, the SAIL innovation program was launched. The following chapters will describe the journey SAIL made with various innovative projects on the 6 predetermined themes: water, energy, data-driven event management, mobility, material and food & drink.

5.2 EVERY DROP COUNTS

The importance of water

“Just as ships need water to sail, humanity needs water to live.” With this statement, Monique Berendsen, senior advisor Water and Sustainability at the Municipality of Amsterdam, highlights why water is important.

Amsterdam’s waterways are under increasing pressure due to pollution, climate extremes, and growing demand. Low water levels reduce water quality, while heavy rainfall causes waterlogging. Sustainable water management is therefore essential. With SAIL’s inherent connection to water, this theme demanded action-driven goals. For SAIL, the water objectives focus on installing drinking water taps, promoting reusable bottles, developing water reuse plans on land and ships, reducing the use of drinking water and monitoring the water quality of the IJ.”

Innovation in action at SAIL 2025

SAIL2025 was more than a maritime spectacle; it served as a testing ground for practical and scalable water solutions. “We wanted to show that sustainability can be practical, visible, and scalable,” Monique says. Key initiatives included an attempt at plastic-free waters through waste interception, wastewater collection from ships, and nutrient recovery from urine. Drinking water conservation was addressed by flushing toilets with water from the IJ river and installing free public drinking water tap points. Sensors and dashboards enabled real-time monitoring, reducing unnecessary flushing and saving water.

The road to SAIL 2030

Looking ahead, the ambition is to meet the EU Water Framework Directive by SAIL 2030. This requires political commitment, stronger collaboration between the municipality and Waternet, and demand-driven innovation. Embedding sustainability through permits and regulations, as well as behavioural change initiatives for citizens and visitors, will be key. Additionally, Monique stresses the ecological impact of intensive motor traffic and the need to rethink recreational water use to protect aquatic ecosystems.

A call to action

Water is not infinite; it is a shared responsibility. “SAIL 2025 showed what’s possible when creativity meets commitment,” Monique reflects. “The question now is: how do we scale these successes and make them part of everyday life in Amsterdam?” The journey to SAIL 2030 is an opportunity to lead by example—turning the tide on water challenges and proving that innovation and tradition can sail together towards a sustainable future.

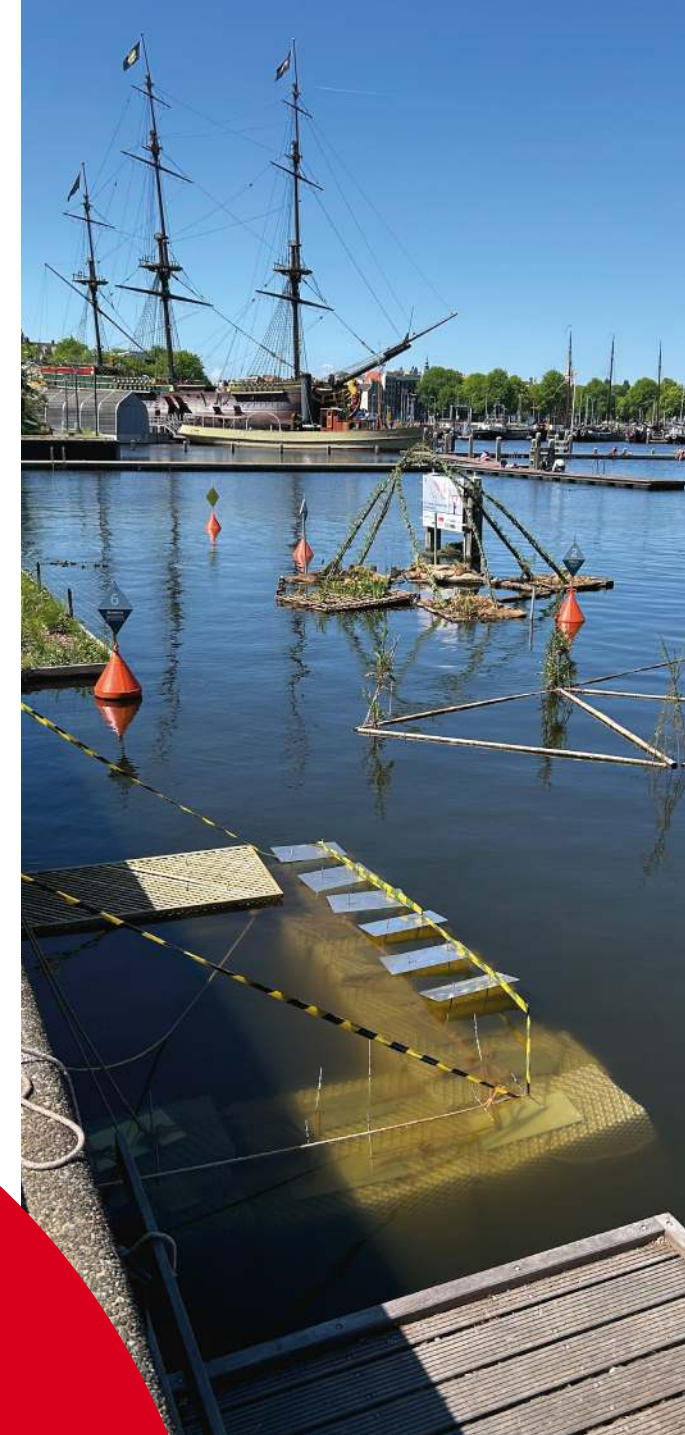
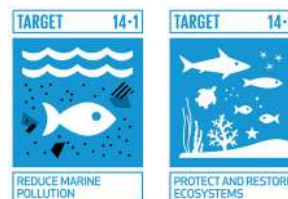
Where SAIL stands

Water is the foundation of SAIL and a shared responsibility. Together with partners such as Green Deal Circular Festivals, Waternet and the City of Amsterdam, SAIL tested solutions to reduce water use, improve water quality and enhance climate resilience. Leading by example and showcasing that these changes are possible and impactful in such a large scale event, and potentially the scale of a city, positioned SAIL as a living lab for sustainable water innovation.

Project BESE

BESE piloted biodegradable habitats for water-filtering species such as mussels in the Binnenhaven at the Marineterrein. These U-shaped structures support ecosystem restoration and improve water clarity over time. Introduced in May 2025, the mussels are monitored regularly, with visible ecological benefits expected after two to three years. The structures degrade naturally over 10–15 years, leaving no harmful residue. *The project is supported by Waternet and the City of Amsterdam.*

SDG 14: Life Below Water





Project Noria

Noria tested a barrier system to intercept floating plastic waste before it could reach the IJ and the North Sea. Installed near Central Station just before the event, the system was integrated into Amsterdam's waste management operations. Although weather conditions limited collection during SAIL, the pilot demonstrated strong potential. Annually, through the deployment of Noria, between 1,200 and 3,300 kilograms of plastic waste is intercepted (equivalent to as many as 2 to 3.8 million pieces of plastic waste).

After SAIL, the barrier was acquired by the Municipality of Amsterdam for permanent placement, with plans to scale up at other key canal entry points. The ambition is to scale this solution across key canal entryways, stopping plastics before they reach the sea keeping our waterways clean and alive. *The project is supported by the City of Amsterdam.*

SDG 14: Life Below Water



Project Smart Water System

Temporary water facilities at large events typically require frequent flushing with drinking water. During SAIL 2025, a smart water system was developed which used temperature sensors and automated flushing to minimise water use. Flushing occurred only when safety thresholds were exceeded, resulting in just 800 litres of drinking water used.

Tested at two locations, the system proved effective and scalable, enabling smarter water use.

Additionally, toilets at major sanitary facilities were flushed with IJ water, and vacuum toilets were deployed. Together, these measures saved 323,000 litres of drinking water over five days. *This project is initiated by MTD and Capgemini.*

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation



Upscaling circular water chains

In collaboration with Green Deal Circular Festivals, SAIL tested several pilots to reduce drinking water waste and recover nutrients from urine. While small-scale, these pilots strengthened partnerships and paved the way for a multi-year collaboration towards SAIL 2030. Uniting festivals and city partners to build a climate-resilient water system.

According to programme manager Christiaan Elings, events like SAIL help demonstrate practical solutions, though legal barriers remain a challenge. Overcoming these will require political support and collective effort. *This project is supported by GDCF, Waternet, DGTL and Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.*

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation



Ripple effects

SAIL 2025 transformed Amsterdam's waterways into a living lab for water innovation. From mussel habitats to smart flushing systems, these pilots show how events can drive systemic change. The key lesson is that innovation must be scalable and embedded in policy. By 2030, SAIL can serve as a blueprint for climate-resilient urban water management, inspiring cities and events alike. Every drop saved contributes to a broader shift towards treating water as a shared resource, and even small interventions can create waves of change.



5.3 FUELING THE FUTURE

SAIL 2025 showed how large-scale events can help accelerate the energy transition in a dense city like Amsterdam. With limited space, grid congestion and rising energy demand, the challenge is complex, but also full of opportunity. Together with experts such as Mimi Eelman from the municipality of Amsterdam and Paul Schurink, expert in energy supply for large scale events, SAIL became a living lab for integrated, fossil-free energy solutions.

During the event, sustainable generators powered by bioethanol and hydrogen and were tested in real conditions. Their visibility mattered: seeing clean energy at work helped build trust and public acceptance, an essential step towards systemic change.

Smart energy planning delivered strong results. Diesel use dropped from over 100,000 litres in earlier editions to just 14,000 litres, thanks to better monitoring, grid connections and the use of batteries for peak shaving. Schurink emphasises that the technology already exists: with smart choices, major events can reduce fuel use by 40–75% and overall energy demand by up to 25%. Green grid power remains the most efficient base, complemented by batteries and clean generators where needed.

Technology alone is not enough. Clear incentives, transparent data sharing and early collaboration across the entire chain, from organisers to suppliers, proved crucial. Financial models based on actual consumption, supported by reliable metering, encourage responsible use and shared ownership.

SAIL also exposed structural challenges: limited space, affordability, and the question of how temporary solutions can connect to permanent urban systems. Looking ahead, a fully emission-free energy supply for SAIL 2030 is within reach, if responsibilities, data

exchange and sustainability requirements are embedded in permits and contracts.

The strength of SAIL lies not only in innovation, but in emotion. Pride, community and shared experience proved powerful drivers of behavioural change. What people celebrate together, they are more willing to protect together. Amsterdam's plans for permanent Energy Hubs signal the second wave of the energy transition, turning SAIL's temporary impact into lasting change.

Where SAIL stands

With its high but temporary energy demand, SAIL is ideally positioned to test fossil-free alternatives. In 2025, CO₂ emissions were reduced through hydrogen-based systems, bioethanol-water generators, sustainable battery packs and maximised fixed grid connections. Only a limited number of backup generators ran on HVO100 when needed. All electricity used at SAIL was 100% green, supplied by Vattenfall. Additionally, research into safe use of hydrogen-based systems in the public space were employed together with Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO).

Project MayMaan

As part of SAIL's Energy Plan, MayMaan and Vattenfall showcased the Aquastroke 35: a clean, portable generator running on 70% water and 30% bioethanol. One of the two units powered a location during the event, demonstrating a reliable,

low-emission alternative to diesel generators. The second model was used to showcase the technology in action through QR codes and an innovation session, the project reached a wide audience. It positioned Aquastroke as a scalable clean-power off the grid option for future events.

This project is supported by Vattenfall.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy





Project Neology

Neology developed an ammonia-to-hydrogen system for emission-free, off-grid power. Unfortunately, on-site testing at SAIL was not feasible due to safety regulations. Instead, Neology presented its concept during a stakeholder session with 80 experts, exploring technology, applications and safety. A technical and economic study identified suitable pilot sites in Amsterdam, including construction and port locations. The next step is a detailed safety analysis to enable real-world testing. While not demonstrated live, SAIL proved a valuable platform to share knowledge, build partnerships and advance sustainable, emission-free fuels. *This project is supported by the municipality of Amsterdam.*

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy



Making waves

By testing scalable, decentralised energy solutions, SAIL 2025 showed how temporary events can fuel long-term change. Clean alternatives such as hydrogen systems, bioethanol generators and batteries help reduce fossil fuel use and ease pressure on congested grids.

The impact reaches beyond the event itself. Amsterdam is preparing permanent Energy Hubs at the Marineterrein and in the port, creating space for year-round innovation. Other cities and events can follow this course, using moments of celebration as testing grounds for the energy systems of tomorrow. What started as a temporary setup can become a lasting wave of change.

5.4 DRIVEN BY DATA

Public safety is increasingly shaped by digital tools and real-time data. As cities become smarter, new opportunities emerge for safer, more responsive events, provided innovation remains rooted in trust, privacy and public values. During SAIL 2025, the City of Amsterdam explored how digital infrastructure can support safety at scale. As Eelco Thiellier, program manager at the City of Amsterdam noted: "Technology must serve people, not the other way around." SAIL showed that the real value of data lies in creating a safe, seamless experience, one that respects privacy and strengthens public trust. Early involvement of all stakeholders, including privacy authorities, proved essential.

Where SAIL stands

At an event the size of SAIL, data plays a vital role. Smart use of technology and real-time information sharing between operational partners helped improve safety, flow and visitor experience. Intelligent systems supported smooth operations, allowing teams to anticipate situations and respond together.

Project Digital Twin

During SAIL 2025, a digital twin was introduced as a shared platform for real-time safety coordination. Developed over two years with public and private partners, it combined more than 80 data layers into one Common Operational Picture. Police, emergency services, city authorities and the Port of Amsterdam all worked from the same live overview.

After earlier trials during King's Day, Memorial Day and Pride, SAIL proved the system's value at scale. Partners praised the shared situational awareness and coordination. Building on this success, the ambition is to roll out the digital twin nationally

across all safety regions. Additionally, a documentary "Behind the SAIL" was made to convey the lessons learned of implementing this project during SAIL. This documentary is available upon request from the SAIL organization. This project is initiated by de Veiligheidsregio Amsterdam-Amstelland. *This project is initiated by de Veiligheidsregio Amsterdam-Amstelland.*

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities



Project Crowdscan

At SAIL 2025 Crowdscan tested a wireless sensor network to monitor crowd density during evening concerts. Using low-frequency radio waves, the system provided real-time insights into occupancy levels across three areas.

Integrated into the Digital Twin, Crowdscan supported proactive crowd management. Initial results confirmed its accuracy and usefulness as a decision-support tool, offering clear potential for future use by Amsterdam's safety authority and police. *This project is supported by the Municipality of Amsterdam.*





Project X-Alert

X-Alert explored real-time monitoring of visitor movement on the water by analysing GPS signals from electronic devices. While estimating total visitor numbers proved challenging, the pilot demonstrated strong potential for targeted applications.

In restricted port zones, for example, the technology could help monitor access and enforce safety boundaries. The pilot clarified where electronic detection adds the most value in complex urban and maritime settings. *This project is supported by the Municipality of Amsterdam.*

Ripple effects

SAIL 2025 didn't offer one-size-fits-all solutions, but it set a clear direction and **created room for innovation**. Smarter safety is not just about technology; it's about shared responsibility. Innovation must be co-created, privacy respected, and technology rooted in purpose. Tools like the Digital Twin, Crowdsan and X-Alert showed how data can support safer events when embedded from the start and guided by trust. SAIL didn't just pilot technology, it piloted a mindset: people first, data as a collective compass, and innovation as a shared journey forward.

5.5 THE WAY WE MOVE

With 2.5 million visitors, SAIL 2025 puts a spotlight on a global challenge: how cities move people within limited space, time and emissions. As Joost van der Made of Capgemini notes, sustainable mobility is about more than CO₂ alone, it's about accessibility, liveability and smart use of space. Cities are nearing their limits. Rethinking mobility therefore means more than new infrastructure; it requires behavioural change. People need to be informed, motivated and enabled to travel differently. Large events like SAIL can help make that shift tangible. If millions experience a better way of moving, new habits can take root.

Where SAIL stands

Mobility and accessibility are growing challenges at the same time that Amsterdam is moving towards fully zero-emission traffic by 2050. With 2,5 millions visitors in a few days, SAIL acts as a real-life stress test for the city's transport system.

Thanks to its temporary and experimental nature, SAIL functions as a living lab for mobility innovation. It coordinates flows across trains, roads, ferries and waterways. Together with partners such as the Municipality of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Transport Region, HIRS Advies and Capgemini, the event tested smart travel information, crowd management and incentives for sustainable transport, generating insights that reach far beyond the event.

SAIL Travel Suggestion

SAIL's mobility plan focused on reducing car use and encouraging greener alternatives. In close collaboration with the City of Amsterdam, car-free zones were introduced, cycling was prioritised, and **60,000 temporary bike stands were installed**. A key innovation was the SAIL Travel Suggestion, integrated into the SAIL app and website. By combining transport modes and ranking options by sustainability, travel time and cost, the tool guided visitors towards smarter choices. As a result, **67% of users travelled by public transport or bike, and only 33% by car**. Which is a sustainable modal split for large scale events.

Although launched shortly before the event, the Travel Suggestion showed strong potential to influence travel behaviour, reduce environmental impact and generate valuable mobility insights. The tool has already sparked interest from cultural institutions and has since been applied at other major events. *This project is initiated by Hirs Advies and supported by Capgemini.*

Roboat

During SAIL, Roboat piloted a navigation support system on a GVB ferry across the IJ river. Using sensors and cameras, the system provided real-time object detection to support captains, improving safety, comfort and fuel efficiency. After initial training and fine-tuning, the system operated reliably during the event. Stakeholders responded positively, seeing clear potential for scaling the technology to more crossings and contributing to safer, smoother journeys on the water.

This project is supported by the Municipality of Amsterdam.

Ripple effects

SAIL 2025 showed that mobility innovation works best when it is intentional, integrated and data-driven. By applying STOMP, a method **prioritising active and sustainable modes of transport over private vehicles**, and using real-time data, we nudged travel behaviour at scale. Tools like the SAIL Travel Suggestion and Roboat subtly shifted behaviour, improved flow and supported safer travel, without losing sight of accessibility or public trust. Looking ahead to 2030, mobility must be designed in from the start: routes co-created, crowd flows anticipated, and digital guidance embedded across every touchpoint. Events like SAIL are more than moments of celebration, they are proving grounds for mobility systems that can serve cities long after the last ship has sailed.



5.6 RE:SOURCE

Across the Netherlands, the urgency to move towards a circular economy is growing. Yet material use remains largely linear, and waste systems differ widely across municipalities. This makes sustainable behaviour confusing, especially at large events. As materials coordinator Leonie Boon notes: *“We need national alignment to make circular choices feel natural.”*

Where SAIL stands

Responsible material use lies at the heart of SAIL's sustainability ambitions. For a waterfront city like Amsterdam, waste is not just a land issue, it directly affects rivers and seas.

Guided by the principles of reduce, reuse and recycle, the event showed what's possible when design, technology and collaboration align. Together with Collect & Clean, materials were carefully selected and pre-sorted to recover higher-quality resources. Because of Verpact, visitors were able to return deposit packaging via smart bulk machines or Recycle Hubs distributed across the site. At the Heineken and Verpact Float-In, visitors could hand in their waste directly from the water.

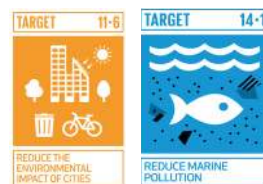
To protect the IJ and canals, Plastic Whale and Noria partnered with SAIL to remove and prevent litter in the water. From floating waste collection to AI-powered monitoring, SAIL demonstrated that circularity requires rethinking the entire system, not just adding more bins.

Zwerfinator

At SAIL 2025, a long-term litter data project was upgraded to an AI-powered platform to improve waste monitoring. Since 2016, founder of Zwerfinator Dirk Groot has collected and manually tagged litter data. For SAIL, the aim was to automate analysis and assess litter beyond the event site to evaluate the waste system's effectiveness. With support from Hogeschool Utrecht and Capgemini, an AI model called LitterLens, trained

on over one million images, now identifies litter by type, material and brand. A 650-metre stretch near SAIL was cleaned before and checked after the event, showing no increase in litter linked to SAIL. The next step is scaling this approach to map urban litter hotspots and improve waste policy. The foundation is already working with municipalities nationwide and exploring expansion in Amsterdam. *This project is supported by Capgemini.*

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG 14: Life Below Water



Ripple effects

During SAIL 2025 waste management was reimagined. From Verpact's bulk deposit machines and the Float-In to AI-driven litter insights, the event became a living lab for a movement towards circularity. Data helped shift responsibility upstream, while design and hospitality made recycling intuitive and engaging. LitterLens showed how geo-tagged litter data can drive smarter policy and shift responsibility upstream. The Float-In made recycling joyful, proving that design and hospitality can change behaviour. Looking ahead, circularity should start with data, aligned systems and smart procurement. Every event can be a prototype, not a one-off. What worked at SAIL can ripple outward, to King's Day, Pride or Lowlands, where visitors become contributors and waste becomes insight. The real shift is not technological, but cultural: moving from managing waste to designing it out, together.





5.7 FOOD FOR THOUGHT

At SAIL 2025, sustainability was not only visible on the water, but also on the plate. Under the guidance of Casper Fonk from Food Bookers and Maartje Nelissen from Plant FWD, food became a driver for change, not by preaching, but by tempting.

Where SAIL stands

This approach is guided by five bold choices that shape SAIL's food strategy:

1. No beef or pork (except one symbolic, half plant-based burger)
2. Only green-listed fish
3. Plant-forward menus at every food point
4. Fair pricing: plant-based never more expensive than meat
5. Smart nudges through menu design, naming and chef's recommendation

Why was food such a big focus this edition?

Maartje: "Food is where sustainability becomes personal. We didn't want to preach—we wanted to seduce. We didn't label it. We just made it delicious and put it at the top of the menu." Reality eats ambition for breakfast. So Casper Fonk and his team got to work. Casper: "At a public event like SAIL, you're always balancing ideals with logistics. We focused on volume products: fries, burgers, snacks, pizza. But even there, we innovated. Burgers were halfway plant-based. And our vegan hotdog—TopDog—was a hit."

What worked—and what didn't?

Casper: "The vegan kroket was a surprise success. People loved it. But we also saw that some ingredients dry out, while seaweed keeps moisture and bite. These are the kinds of insights we'll build on."

Maartje: "We learned that default matters. One food truck offered only vegetarian options. It flopped. People want choice. So we flipped the menu: plant-based first, meat last. That way, people make a sustainable choice without feeling forced."

What's next for SAIL 2030?

Casper: "Sustainability has to work at scale. We need trend analyses, data from POS systems, visitor profiles. That's where the next leap will come from." Maartje: "The vegan option doesn't always have to be healthy. It can be indulgent. Craving is part of the experience." From creative nudges to bold menu shifts, SAIL 2025 showed that more sustainable food can be delicious, inclusive and scalable. The journey continues, towards a future where food choices reflect not just taste, but values.

Social Tipping point

Researchers and practitioners co-designed interventions and tested them live during the event. Experiments showed that positive first experiences with plant-based food, group dynamics, and smart menu design all influence choices. Simply changing order, language or recommendations increased plant-based selection—without removing options. The collaboration offered a blueprint for linking science, policy and practice in real-world settings.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
SDG 13: Climate Action



"Behaviour changes when people feel free, not forced," notes one researcher. Researchers and practitioners co-designed interventions and tested them live during the event.

Experiments showed that positive first experiences with plant-based food, group dynamics, and smart menu design all influence choices. Simply changing order, language or recommendations increased plant-based selection, without removing options. By testing interventions live, SAIL, UvA and SEVEN created a blueprint for linking science with real-world food system change. *This project is initiated by the UvA.*

Ripple effects

SAIL 2025 didn't just serve food, it shifted perspectives. By removing beef and pork, offering green-listed fish and making plant-based choices attractive, eating became a subtle act of culture change. Visitors didn't just eat differently, they were tempted to think differently. Turning food into a catalyst for change. Smart naming and menu design made sustainable choices feel natural, offering a insights for events across the Netherlands.

Looking ahead, events can evolve into living labs for regenerative food systems, where data, design and collaboration drive continuous improvement. SAIL's collaboration with the University of Amsterdam showed the power of events as living labs, generating insights that can inform national food policy and urban strategy. What worked at SAIL can inspire festivals, institutions and cities nationwide. Joy and sustainability shared a plate, and the movement has begun.





06

ANCHORING IMPACT



ANCHORING IMPACT



6.1 ECONOMICAL IMPACT

Based on a public survey with almost 2500 respondents, input of the SAIL 2025 organization concerning financial spending and results, and several necessary assumptions in the calculations, **the estimated economic impact of SAIL 2025 on the city of Amsterdam is around €120 million***. This impact was, amongst others, generated by means of the financial support of SAIL's partners, the many corporate hospitality packages, the funds and grants that supported SAIL, the hard work of our suppliers and the visitors that came to the event.

**The calculated economic impact concerns direct, additional expenditures within Amsterdam. Certain categories cannot be visualized. This includes unconfirmed spin-offs or indirect effects, for example, expenditures by visitors outside the city, as well as tangible or intangible effects for public stakeholders, commercial partners, businesses along the IJ River, etc. This includes effects from activation programs, media/advertising, event organization, and logistics. Therefore, the actual total financial impact is higher.*

6.2 BEYOND SAIL 2025

SAIL has always been more than Tall Ships and a crowded quay. It is a mirror and a multiplier: a place where the city and port can test the future at full scale. In 2025, SAIL functioned as a living lab, delivering tangible results and credible lessons. The challenge now is not whether innovation and change is possible, but how to make it last.

Why pilots fail and how SAIL differs

Pilots often fade because they lack: ownership beyond innovators, funding that spans fiscal years, interoperable data and standards, and proof that matters to decision-makers. SAIL's strength lies in its scale, associated partners, legitimacy and return. By connecting public authorities, market partners, knowledge institutes and citizens, and by building continuity across editions, pilots can grow into lasting capabilities.

From wave to current: mechanisms that make it stick.

Governance and mandates: turn innovation collaborations into standing coalitions with clear ownership, KPIs and multi-year roadmaps towards SAIL 2030.

Open standards and data continuity: keep shared operational insights alive beyond the event, with privacy-by-design and transferable playbooks.

Evidence loops: move from showcases to measurable outcomes, tracking what truly works.

Procurement for impact: reward sustainability, accessibility and collaboration in tenders. Apply green contracting with data reporting obligations.

Capability building: pair new technology with training, inclusion and talent development.

Policy alignment: use SAIL's legitimacy to unlock regulatory pathways and scale innovation. Develop close collaboration with national and international governmental organisations and municipalities.

Narrative and culture: keep innovation visible and human, culture change is what makes impact endure.

From SAIL to city, and back again.

The most durable path is circular: test at SAIL, refine at other events, readopt in city operations, and return stronger to SAIL. That rhythm turns

peaks into progress. It also widens ownership: what begins as a festival solution becomes public infrastructure, business practice, and community habit.

Let's make the wave a steady tide.
Not a pilot, but a practice.

6.3 CHARTING THE FUTURE COURSE

SAIL's impact does not end with one edition. Looking ahead, SAIL aims to lead the event industry by 2035 as an iconic maritime event that is Net Zero by Event Design. Our ambition goes beyond hosting a successful event; we feel responsible for contributing to a liveable world for future generations. Guided by sustainability, inclusion and talent development, SAIL seeks to create a lasting positive impact on both society, the municipality, the port, and the environment. Through innovation tables, a knowledge program with dialogues and a summit, focus on partnerships for the goals (SDG 17) and transparent reporting, SAIL contributes to long-term transitions aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. By returning every five years, the event combines celebration with responsibility, accelerating positive change as a catalyst for a more sustainable and inclusive future. Let's keep making waves together.



6.4 CONSIDERATIONS

Effective impact measurement starts with early stakeholder engagement, especially within a complex supplier network.

Our CO₂ measurement is not a full life-cycle analysis and excludes certain upstream and downstream processes. Results should be read as indicative, highlighting orders of magnitude and key hotspots rather than precise values or causal relationships.

Despite these limitations, mobility (including nautical activities) and food & beverages clearly emerge as the main emission sources, identifying the most important levers for future reductions.

Key considerations include:

- Methodological limitations: Data gaps, measurement constraints, sample size, and evaluation period.
- Assumptions: Modal split, travel distances, car occupancy, walking share, emission factors, and average menus.
- Scope limitations: Not a full life-cycle assessment; some upstream/downstream processes excluded.
- Risks and uncertainties: Reliance on self-reported data and extrapolations.
- Contextual and stakeholder influences: Economic, social, regulatory factors, and behaviour affect outcomes.
- Scalability/transferability: Highlights orders of magnitude and key hotspots; context dependent.

Recommendations for Future Editions

SAIL 2025 showed progress in energy, waste reduction, and public drinking-water access. However, across nautical, mobility, materials, F&B, and social themes, formal planning, monitoring, and verifiable data were limited, leaving several ambitions partially or completely unachieved or at least unverifiable.

To advance sustainability in future editions and enhance the verifiability of targets the following recommendations are made:

- Make data sharing mandatory, included obligation in supplier contracts.
- Require standardised templates for comparability and consistent emission calculations.
- Engage visitors in mobility datacollection via surveys or onsite interviews.
- Gather fuel-use data for private boats in collaboration with the municipality.
- Use digital solutions and a supplier portal to improve data quality, traceability, and comparability.

Priority gaps in data are: Supplier and artist mobility, transport of goods/materials, staff/artist hotel stays, and material manufacturing emissions.





07

IN CLOSING



IN CLOSING

7.1 CONCLUSION

SAIL 2025 demonstrated what is possible in the future. We reduced our consumption of drinking water with smart flushing and IJ-water substitution. We improved situational awareness with a digital twin and predictive crowd insights. We turned waste into a shared responsibility, from recycle points and the Float-In to AI-assisted litter mapping.

We nudged visitors towards more plant-based food choices. We explored cleaner energy options in a grid-constrained world. And we opened doors for people: through SAIL Talent, hundreds of young professionals gained hands-on experience aboard Tall Ships and in event operations, building skills that ripple into their careers.

Through focus on inclusion, we made accessibility a priority—improving physical access, and creating spaces where everyone feels welcome. These are not isolated anecdotes; together they form a system map: governance, partnerships, data, behaviour, technology human capital and connectedness, aligned to outcomes for a safer, cleaner, more inclusive city.

However, there is still significant work ahead. This includes strengthening the governance structures needed to drive real change, formalising plans in close collaboration with key stakeholders, ensuring robust data collection to measure impact, and deepening supplier engagement and compliance. With the SAIL 2025 edition, we took an important first step from which we can learn. Now, it is up to us to build momentum and create an even bigger wave by 2030.





7.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thoroughly thank our partners, stakeholders, family members, volunteers, and all the visitors, ship crews and others involved who made SAIL 2025 possible. Without you, SAIL would not be achievable. We SAIL together. We are all United by Waves.

7.3 COLOPHON

Report information

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