



Climate Action Policy
Consultation Summary
November 2022

Julie's Bicycle EU

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events



Introduction

“We will develop a climate change and environmental sustainability policy for the Arts Council, and support arts organisations in working towards a sustainable, environmentally friendly society.”

Making Great Art Work, Three Year Plan 2020-2022

Taking the lead from national climate policy commitments alongside a drive to integrate climate action across government departments and agencies, the Arts Council is developing its Climate Action and Environmental Policy and Implementation Plan which it aims to launch in early 2023.

The policy is being developed in partnership with Julie's Bicycle EU, a team bringing together Julie's Bicycle UK, Native Events and the Green Arts Initiative in Ireland, and in consultation with Arts Council staff, artists, arts organisations and other key stakeholders.

This report summarises the consultation process undertaken to inform the policy development, who was involved and how, key findings and conclusions.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed.

Key consultation findings and conclusions



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Key consultation findings

1. The climate and nature crisis is an issue of major concern to the arts community. The majority want to accelerate climate action.
2. The arts community is already responding, in particular through creative work, public engagement and programming initiatives, where there has been more funding.
3. On a practical and operational level, climate and environmental action is much less developed, and there has been limited sector support.
4. The lack of sector support has given rise to a range of sector-led support measures, a case of the arts community doing it for itself.
5. A lack of capacity, support, funding and capital investment are the key barriers to action, in particular at a time when the arts are dealing with so many other challenges and competing priorities.
6. Travel and transport is the area of environmental impact of most concern.
7. Despite the challenges, the arts community believes that climate and environmental action offers opportunities to the arts, and that the arts can offer unique opportunities for a green, just and inclusive transition.



Key conclusions

- There is a clear expectation on the Arts Council to do more to support the arts in its response to the climate and nature crisis.
- Support for creative, programming and public engagement initiatives needs to go hand-in-hand with support for greening arts venues, festivals, production and practice.
- The Arts Council needs to work in dialogue and partnership with the arts community to understand its needs and how best to support change.
- Sector collaboration will be crucial to build on and scale up existing skills, knowledge, solutions and leadership within the sector.
- Arts Council funding needs to be developed as both a driver and an enabler of action. The Council will also need to work with local authorities and other funding bodies and stakeholders to unlock additional investment opportunities.
- The Arts Council itself needs to lead by example on climate and environmental action through its corporate actions.
- Climate and environmental action must be centred in justice, fairness and inclusivity.

Consultation context and process



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Context

“The arts are inextricably part of social and cultural change and the Arts Council will be alert to opportunities and responsibilities that arise as a result of changing contexts.”

Making Great Art Work, 2016-2025

There is no greater changing context than the climate and nature crisis.

Human activity is causing rapid changes to the climate and profoundly changing the world we live in. The consequences are being felt globally, nationally and locally. We are overexploiting and damaging the ecosystems upon which we depend and losing biodiversity at an unprecedented rate. Climate change is a loss multiplier: ecosystems and biodiversity loss leads in turn to further climate change impacts.

These changes are already impacting all areas of our economy, our society and our wellbeing. They will cause extensive direct and indirect harm to Ireland, as well as to other countries more exposed and less able to withstand the associated impacts, but are exacting the heaviest toll on the poorest and most marginalised communities and people.

We need to meet this moment of crisis, to make choices wisely, based on what we know, and also on what we can imagine for tomorrow. With creativity and ingenuity we can turn this moment into an unprecedented opportunity to create a better future in which no one is left behind, in other words a green and just transition. This is why the arts have such an important role to play in responding to this crisis.

Consultation process

The consultation process was led by Julie's Bicycle working closely with the Arts Council. It involved interviews, an online survey and a roundtable, engaging about 400 people in total, as well as regular meetings with an Internal Advisory Group at the Arts Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

14 internal
interviews

Arts Managers, strategy
and corporate teams

May 2022

Online survey

314 responses

June 2022

16 external
interviews

11 arts organisations, 2
artists, 3 national bodies

June 2022

Roundtable

44 participants
and contributors

July 2022

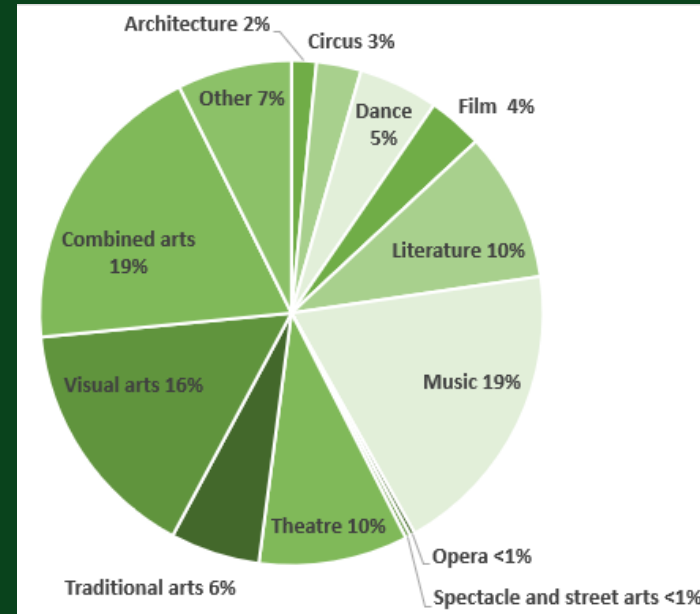
Arts Council – Climate Action Internal Advisory Group

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

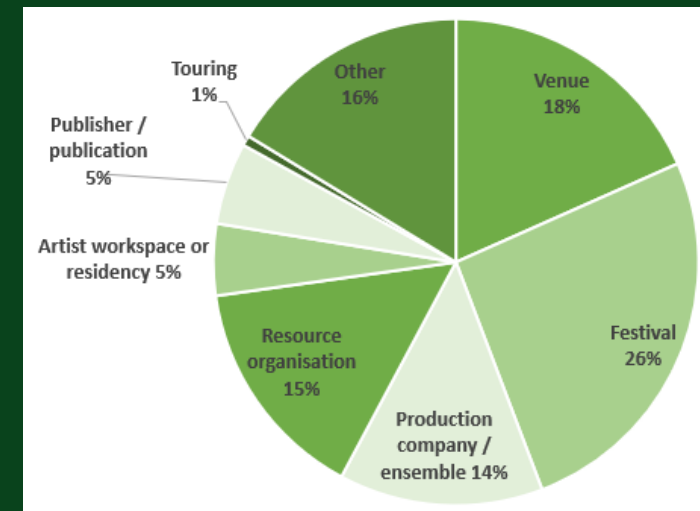
Survey respondents

- 314 complete responses:
 - 149 arts organisations
 - 130 artists
 - 35 arts workers
- A broad mix in terms of artform and activity
- The highest number of responses by artform came from music, combined arts and visual arts
- The highest number of responses by activity (organisations only) came from festivals, venues and resource organisations
- 75% of people responding on behalf of arts organisations were in either an executive director/director or senior management role

Responses by artform (based on 313 responses)



Responses by activity (based on 147 responses)



External interviews

11 arts organisations, 2 artists, 3 national bodies



Maeve Stone



Claire McCluskey



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland Programme
2017-2022



Roundtable

44 participants and contributors

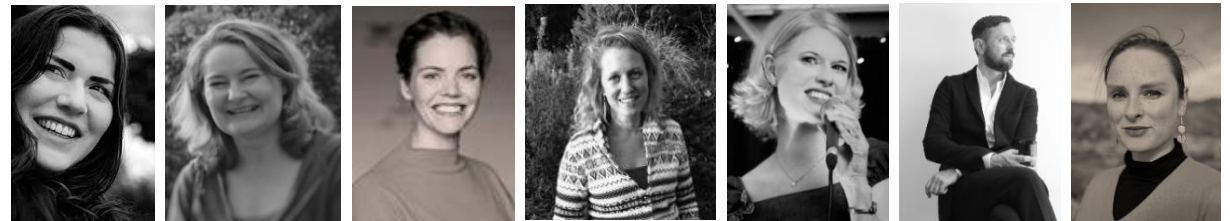
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Arts organisations



Artists



Alice Kinsella

Dr. Cathy Fitzgerald

Claire McCluskey

Dr. Eileen Hutton

Emilie Conway

John Gerrard

Maeve Stone

Resource organisations



National bodies



Arts Council and its partners



Environmental sector



Participants in discussion at the Climate Action Roundtable, Smock Alley, 12th July 2022



Consultation findings in more detail



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The Arts Council Climate Action Roundtable

Welcome & Introductions

Alice Ryan & Deirdre Behan
The Arts Council

We are thrilled that you are here today!

There is so much already happening! We are in **Listening Mode**

ACTIVITY POLICY has to catch up!

Discussion 1: Arts Council FUNDING as a DRIVER for Climate Action



Setting the Scene

Alison Tickell
Julie's Bicycle

This is an overdue conversation

The role of **Culture** to change our world

Justice & Inclusion

Diverse Voices

CLIMATE CULTURE CRISIS
Put culture at the heart of the Climate Crisis Conversation

The SOLUTIONS are there

Must be Policy-led

The climate crisis is a crisis of **CULTURE**

Moulding our grief and anger into **POWER!**

Responsibility of Artists to produce...
Influencing people's feelings
Careful, thoughtful Imagery

Carbon Legacy
Western Flag
John Gerrard
Artist

Flare Oceania
The ocean is burning!
Tonga
FIELD EXCHANGE

Discussion 2: Capacity Building and Support



Voices from the Sector



Discussion 3: Unlocking LEADERSHIP and Innovation



Consultation Process and Key Findings

Claire Buckley
Julie's Bicycle




- PRIORITIES** for Arts Council Climate Action Policy
- Funding
 - Capacity Building & Support
 - Unlocking leadership & innovation
 - Arts Council corporate actions



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1. The climate and nature crisis is an issue of major concern to the arts community. The majority want to accelerate climate action.

Concern within the arts community about the climate crisis was voiced loudly and clearly throughout the consultation, a concern which is both personal and professional.

72% of survey respondents said climate and environmental action is extremely important to them personally.

While there is frustration that there has not been greater progress, it is clear that climate and environmental action is a priority for most within the sector.

63% of survey respondents identified climate and environmental action as a priority:

- 19% as a top priority
- 44% as one of a number of priorities

A further 26% identified it as an emerging priority.



2. The arts community is already responding, in particular through creative work, public engagement and programming initiatives, where there has been more funding.

A number of initiatives have benefited from Arts Council funding, local authority support and the ESB's €0.25 million Brighter Future Arts Fund. Creative Ireland's €2 million Creative Climate Action programme has been the main source of funding for creative and public engagement initiatives. Creative Europe is also providing some funding opportunities for environmental projects through European partnership initiatives.

There is a small but emerging group of artists and arts organisations deeply connected to environmental issues on a micro level and acting as agents for change within the arts community.

Climate and social justice and inclusivity are common threads of existing initiatives, with a particular focus on youth, farmers and peatland communities.

Examples of arts community responses to the climate and nature crisis



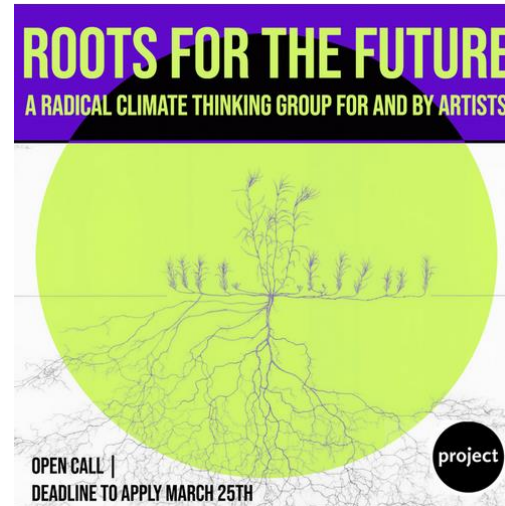
CRACKING LIGHT PRODUCTIONS
A CREATIVE CLIMATE PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



INSTANT DISSIDENCE



THE FUTURE IS IN THE FIELDS, LISA FINGLETON
CREATIVE IRELAND AND IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART COMMISSION



Flare (Oceania), John Gerrard 2021



An Irish-based collective of artists from different disciplines, responding to the climate crisis creatively and inspired by nature

Irish Architecture Foundation

RE—IMAGINE



A national campaign that works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to local challenges



3. On a practical and operational level, climate and environmental action is much less developed. There has been limited sector support.

22% said they are 'well on the way' on climate and environmental action and 47% said they are 'making initial progress'. 20% said they are 'at the very beginning'.

79% of survey respondents say they have not had any support around climate action.

“Ormston House will be an associate cultural centre for the Creative Europe project, Rebuilding to Last, and we participate in the connected Sustainability Hub. We have joined this international initiative as we cannot secure adequate resources or funding in Ireland to engage with experts (architectural conservationists, engineers, consultants, for example) or to address significant, practical adaptations in our organisation and venue. In researching climate action funding in the arts in Ireland, I have found opportunities tend to be focused more on short turn-around events with publicity opportunities for awareness-raising, and less on long-term planning and behavioural change.”

Mary Conlon - Artistic Director, Ormston House

Examples of arts organisations taking action



Sustainability | Galway International Arts Festival





4. The lack of sector support has given rise to a range of sector-led support measures, a case of the arts community doing it for itself.

Support measures to date have been mainly of and for the sector, led by a small number of resource organisations, artists, freelance arts professionals and arts organisations.

“Although the arts is uniquely positioned to provide new perspectives and encourage audiences to adapt to more climate responsible behaviours, the arts shouldn't have to do all the heavy lifting - nor should art that is explicitly about climate issues get priority of funding. Rather every practice, regardless of thematic 'content' should be supported to operate as sustainably as possible, across the board.”

Survey response, anonymous

Examples of sector support and training initiatives



Association of Irish Stage Technicians

Green Venues / Productions Forum



Greening Venues Pilot Project



Greening Arts Centres Project



Our Green Approach






5. A lack of capacity, support, funding and capital investment are the key barriers to action, in particular at a time when the arts are dealing with so many other challenges and competing priorities.

While funding opportunities for environmentally themed creative, programming and public engagement initiatives are growing, and some local authorities are now investing in greener venues, it is generally much more difficult for the arts to secure funding and investment in greening arts place, production and practice. In addition, not enough is yet known on the capital investment required for the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient arts infrastructure.

The need for funding and support was highlighted by the National Campaign for the Arts' 2022 pre-budget submission, calling on the government to address the climate emergency by providing substantial investment and training to enable the sector to adapt its work practices and its buildings to become more climate resilient and to insulate arts spaces from energy insecurity.

Other challenges identified during the consultation were a lack of environmental skills and knowledge and the lack and increased cost of 'green' alternatives, products and services.



“Every arts organisation I know is overstretched and struggling with workload, team turnover, adjusting to hybrid working, maintaining funding levels, reporting and compliance. Environmental issues absolutely must be a priority for us, but so too must inclusion policy, the Irish language, fundraising, communications. It takes time to do this properly and the continuation of capacity building funding will be essential for many organisations to access help.”

Elaina Ryan - Children's Books Ireland

“We have undergone a number of external audits, worked with consultants, created a policy and worked on a very clear action plan. We understand our priorities and the most effective way to reduce the theatre’s carbon footprint but the key issue is funding as the upgrades that have the most positive impact also are the most expensive.”


Jane Parsons - Development Manager, Hawks Well Theatre



6. **Travel and transport is the area of environmental impact of most concern.**

Throughout the consultation, the issue of travel and touring impacts came up time and again. A number of artists and arts organisations are working on this issue already, for example calculating the carbon impact of artist travel and touring activities and developing or exploring low impact touring models.

Travel and transport impact is the most challenging area for the arts sector to address, given both the importance of international working for the arts and the huge challenges Ireland faces in transitioning to a low and zero carbon transport infrastructure.



“It is important to acknowledge the opportunities to work in a more environmentally sustainable way in our sector while also recognising the limits. As small organisations and individuals faced with limited environmentally sustainable solutions, it can be difficult to create, produce and present work in the most climate conscious way. This is particularly true when presenting work in public spaces and in communities without access to public transport and the ability to plug into the grid. While we can play our part, there is also a responsibility on government to invest in infrastructure (transport, energy) which will allow the sector to access less impactful solutions.”

Culture Works

“There needs to be a very serious conversation around touring in the international arts community..... As an island nation, we need to start thinking about this more seriously, as we are currently far too reliant on air travel. In the same way as we need to think about the air miles of the food we buy, we need to think about the air miles of the art we enjoy.”

Survey response, anonymous




7. Despite the challenges, the arts community believes that climate and environmental action offers opportunities to the arts, and that the arts can offer unique opportunities for a green, just and inclusive transition.

74% of survey respondents believe climate and environmental action can bring opportunities, from opening up new creative, engagement and funding opportunities to improved health and wellbeing.

91% of survey respondents agree “The arts community has a unique and crucial role to play in meeting this moment of climate and environmental crisis – through its own actions and through its ability to engage with people, inform and mobilise change.”

The arts community already understands the role it can play in addressing the climate and nature crisis, in particular through its ability to bring connection, creativity and different voices and perspectives to the conversation and solutions we need. It understands that what we do next, must be inclusive, connected to the people, communities and places most impacted.



“The arts community has always been an advocate for change in society. Using our unique skill-set we can be a driver in climate action by bringing visibility to the crisis at hand.”

Survey response, anonymous

“I believe that artists have a vital role to play in creating impactful change and that dealing with climate research through arts practice can be instrumental given the correct opportunities and supports.”

Survey response, anonymous

“Focus on embedding creative and arts practitioners in decision-making from an early stage through creative brainstorming, imagining and codesign of solutions for communities and local authorities / other funding / policymaking bodies working together.... persuade decision-makers of the benefits of a creative approach to building agreement on matters of public importance, especially those which involve challenging and changing behaviours to bring mutual climate benefits.”

Nicola Matthews and Nessa Roche, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Hear what the speakers at the Climate Action Roundtable had to say



Why the arts and culture and cultural policy is crucial to climate action - [video](#)

Alison Tickell
Founder Director
Julie's Bicycle



What the arts can bring to climate action - [video](#)

John Gerrard
Artist



Eco-ableism and inclusive climate action - [video](#)

Emilie Conway
Vocal jazz artist, composer, lyricist and founding artist of the Disabled and Disabled Academics Campaign for Human and Cultural Rights



An artist's perspective on facilitating and catalysing climate action - [video](#)

Maeve Stone
Theatre and film artist



Insights from the greening arts centres and venues pilot projects - [video](#)

Catriona Fallon
Green Arts Initiative in Ireland



Change-making and collective action for a green and just transition - [video](#)

Megan Best
Managing Director Native Events, Host of the Green Room on Dublin City FM



Insights from ecoliteracy and UNESCO ESD Earth Charter training for creative and cultural professionals, from the Haumea Ecovercity - [video](#)

Dr. Cathy Fitzgerald
Ecological artist, educator, researcher, advisor
Founder Director Haumea Ecovercity
Burren College of Art Ecology Research Fellow



Some reflections on the Climate Action Roundtable

“Today was really heartening in terms of the Arts Council beginning to make sustainability a real priority and engaging with arts organisations, artists and independent arts workers in order to do that. I am really glad so many people were invited and that lots of people from across the sector were here. It was also great to see a lot of Arts Council staff present, participating, listening and contributing.”

Aideen McCole - Development and Advocacy Manager, The Ark

“I was delighted to be here as a disabled artist to represent the fact that disabled people care about climate action too. Often we are left out of the discussion and that leads to eco-ableism, so I was able to bring these concepts here and make people aware of them. I think it's so important that disabled artists and activists are involved at this initial level and continue to be integrated and threaded through every discussion and every action from here on out.”

Emilie Conway - Vocal jazz artist, composer, lyricist and founding artist of the Disabled and Disabled Academics Campaign for Human and Cultural Rights

“What I took from today is that there is a huge interest and a huge energy from people to actually achieve some change, that they will go away from today with ideas about how it is possible for all of us to do something even if it is just a small thing, how those small things add up to a big thing and how we can change policy and outcomes if we work together and cooperate.”

Nick Anton - Technical Manager, Dunamais Arts Centre

“What was really important was getting people together in one room - artists, people from arts organisations, people from government - and having the chance for people to connect and hear about what is already happening. There is much more the Arts Council and government should be doing.... What we need is purposeful action at national policy level, combined with what is happening at grass roots level.”

Deirdre Behan - Strategic Development Director, Arts Council



Next steps

This findings and conclusions of this consultation are guiding the development of the Arts Council's Climate Action and Environmental Policy and Implementation Plan which the Council plans to launch in early 2023.

Further information



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The Irish version of the consultation summary results can be found [here](#)



The results of the survey undertaken as part of the consultation can be found [here](#)



A more easily readable version of the roundtable visual minutes can be found [here](#)

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[Julie's Bicycle](#) is a pioneering not-for-profit, mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis.

Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, JB has partnered with over 2000 organisations in the UK and internationally. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate and ecological crisis head-on.

JB supports the arts and culture to:

- become net zero carbon and restore nature
- inspire public action on climate and ecology
- champion environmental justice and fairness



native
events

Established in 2017 as a response to the lack of sustainable solutions available to the events and cultural sector in Ireland, [Native Events](#) now works with an expanding community of partners including festivals and events, councils and corporate clients, ensuring a systems-wide transition towards a more sustainable and circular future.

Native Events believes that cultural events and activities can be a catalyst for societal change. With more than fifteen years' experience in event production, environmental management and consultancy, we are uniquely positioned to help the events, cultural, arts and corporate sectors transition towards real sustainability.



The [Green Arts Initiative in Ireland](#) is an extension of the Green Arts Initiative operated by Creative Carbon Scotland and aims to provide Irish arts organisations with the resources and support to help build a green Irish arts community.

Run by Theatre Forum and Catriona Fallon, under the guidance of Creative Carbon Scotland, the Green Arts Initiative in Ireland aims to:

- support arts organisations with practical advice on reducing their carbon footprint and overall environmental impacts
- provide arts organisations with opportunities to enhance their sustainability competencies through training and networking
- collect information about what organisations are currently doing to improve their sustainability