



Festival House
info@performingartsforum.ie
12 Essex Street East
+353 1 677 8779
Dublin 2, D02 EH42
www.performingartsforum.ie

Performing Arts Forum Climate Action Policy 2025 - 2028

Introduction

Theatre Forum CLG, trading as Performing Arts Forum, was founded in 2003 and is a resource organisation supporting Ireland's performing arts sector. A company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, it has 300 members, including arts centres, venues, production companies, festivals, and independent arts workers. The organisation is governed by a Board of sector practitioners elected by its members, with some additional co-opted members. Performing Arts Forum is funded by the Arts Council and also generates income from membership subscriptions, events, and sponsorship.

Its operations are based in Festival House, Temple Bar, Dublin, a building it shares with Dublin Theatre Festival and Dublin Dance Festival. A team of two full-time and two part-time staff work year-round to deliver services, events and resources.

Performing Arts Forum's mission is to be an effective point of connection for the sector, facilitating opportunities for information sharing and collaboration, carrying out research and collecting evidence to effect change where it is needed, promoting effective models of practice, and providing relevant resources for member artists, arts workers, and arts organisations.

Our values are evident in how we work – fostering an environment “Where Connection Creates Change”, which is both our tagline and our ethos.

Climate Action Policy & How We Work

Environmental sustainability is central to our mission because we believe the performing arts have a vital role to play in shaping cultural attitudes and inspiring collective action. By embedding responsible practices into our work, we aim to lead by example and contribute to the systemic changes needed for a more sustainable future.

The organisation is dedicated to fostering environmentally responsible practices and advocating for systemic changes that promote sustainability.



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Our Activities

On a practical level, we deliver a series of events annually, both online and in person. A key highlight is **The Gathering**, a landmark networking event in the performing arts calendar, attracting over 300 attendees each year. We also maintain a website for the sector and provide a suite of valuable resources to support the arts community.

Since 2018, we have been actively working in the area of green arts, co-founding the **Green Arts Initiative in Ireland**. This initiative, an extension of the Green Arts Initiative operated by Culture for Climate Scotland (formerly Creative Carbon Scotland), in collaboration with Catriona Fallon, aims to provide Irish arts organisations with the resources and support needed to build a sustainable and environmentally conscious arts community. Highlights of this work include:

- A series of projects collaborating with arts centres and production companies.
- Most recently, producing the Irish version of the **Theatre Green Book**, a practical guide to embedding sustainability into theatre-making practices.

We frequently collaborate with partners on events, including:

- **The Next Stage** (in partnership with Dublin Theatre Festival).
- **MAKE** (in collaboration with Cork Midsummer Festival, Dublin Fringe Festival, and Project Arts Centre).
- Numerous other initiatives that align with our mission of fostering creativity, collaboration, and environmental responsibility.

Our Environmental Goals

We aim to:

1. **Lead by Example:** Demonstrate best practices in environmental responsibility.
2. **Measure and Evaluate:** Assess our own carbon footprint and identify areas for reduction.
3. **Achieve Nationwide Impact:** Establish clear messaging and positioning to foster a greener arts sector.
4. **Foster Inclusion and Evolution:** Involve all stakeholders in shaping attitudes toward sustainable creativity.
5. **Provide Training and Advocacy:** Promote a unified green voice within the arts community.



Our Impacts

We recognise the following as the most significant environmental impacts of our activities. Addressing these is a key focus of our Climate Action Plan and, most importantly, our capacity to influence positive change:

1. Digital Impact

A large portion of the Performing Arts Forum's communications takes place online, including website content, online meetings and training, social media, newsletters, and email correspondence. While digital communication is essential to our work, we acknowledge its environmental footprint and are committed to minimising its impact.

2. Travel Impact

- **Business Travel:** Performing Arts Forum controls its business travel to reduce its environmental consequences.
- **Audience Travel:** Events like **The Gathering** and other activities across Ireland involve audience travel, where our focus shifts to playing an influential role by promoting sustainable travel options and raising awareness.

3. Events Impact

In-person events have a direct environmental impact through travel, accommodation, catering, waste generation, and building energy usage. We aim to address these areas by implementing sustainable practices and encouraging environmentally conscious choices among our collaborators and attendees.

Our Commitment

Our commitment is to embed our Climate Action policy into every aspect of our operations. We also commit to provide the sector with the support and training it needs to become more sustainable. We also recognise the ability that Performing Arts forum has to connect people and influence their behaviour, and are committed to harnessing this to create a greener, more sustainable arts landscape. Our Areas of Focus for 2025-28 are as follows:

1. Influencing Sustainable Practices within the arts sector:

- Share and expand our knowledge of environmental issues by collaborating with other arts and cultural organisations, members, funders, suppliers and other stakeholders.
- With the Green Arts Initiative in Ireland, collaborate with Culture for Climate Scotland (formerly Creative Carbon Scotland) and Renew Culture (UK) to provide information and resources such as the Irish Edition of the Theatre Green Book.



- Collaborate with independent practitioners and organisations and develop sustainable practices.
- Advocate for and provide leadership in sustainable practices for independent practitioners and organisations.
- Motivate (Inspire, lead, support) artists, organisations, and third-party suppliers to adopt environmentally friendly practices.
- Apply the same standards to our own practice and events.

2. Reducing our environmental impact of our operations:

- Aim for a zero-waste policy for our in-person events.
- Minimise the impacts of our own business travel and support members to use sustainable travel (public transport, slow travel, car pooling) options to our events.
- Record and measure carbon impact of PAF business travel and use this to set a target for reduction for 2026.
- Minimise the environmental impact of digital communications.
- Collaborate with partner organisations to optimise energy usage, streamline operations, and enhance waste management in our own building and the buildings we operate in.

Our Action Plan

All the topics and commitments outlined above will be detailed in our accompanying (internal) Climate Action Plan, covering the period from **2025 to 2028**. This plan includes specific timelines for each action and clearly identifies those responsible for their implementation. As a live document, the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated during our monthly Operations meetings to ensure it remains relevant and actionable.

Sharing and Updating Stakeholders

The Action Plan will be discussed monthly within the team and addressed at every Board meeting, of which there are typically seven per year. These regular updates will ensure transparency and provide an opportunity to share progress and insights with stakeholders.

The Policy will be shared widely on our website and through newsletters and other communications.



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Responsibility for Implementation

The ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy and plan rests with the Director, Irma McLoughlin, supported by her team and all members of the Board of Directors.

We greatly appreciate the time and effort you've taken to engage with our Environmental Policy. We are committed to embedding sustainability into every aspect and activity of the Performing Arts Forum and look forward to continuing this important work with our partners, collaborators, and the wider community.