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Creative Scotland Funding Criteria: 4. Environmental Sustainability



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Introduction

In 2021/22 Creative Scotland refreshed its Strategic Framework, establishing a new set of aims and priorities to guide our work. This refresh took into account our remit and the role we are here to deliver. As part of this, we also updated our funding criteria, on which we will base all future funding activity.

These criteria are:

1. Quality and Ambition
2. Engagement
3. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- 4. Environmental Sustainability**
5. Fair Work
6. International (optional - only for applications involving international activity)

Each of the criteria listed above has its own guide, that sets out:

- The outcomes we want to see in this area of our work as a result of our funding
- Where this work aligns to national policy agendas
- Key aspects of the sector's work in this area, including current challenges
- Any links to relevant further information.

To access each guide please [visit our website](#).

Please note that applicants to our Funds do not necessarily need to address all the Criteria set out here. Each Fund will have specific questions which will be proportionate to the levels of funding available. We recognise that organisations and individuals work in different ways and will be at different stages in their development. However, Creative Scotland does expect all those we fund to have a clear vision for delivery against the Fund Criteria and to report impact against them.

Environmental Sustainability

Key outcomes

Our Priority: Helping tackle the climate emergency across Scotland

What do we want to achieve?

The world is facing a climate and biodiversity emergency. Urgent and collective action is required to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5°C and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Culture and creativity have a vital role to play in helping address the climate emergency and contribute to a more environmentally sustainable Scotland. We also believe that the culture and creative sector can play a key role in meeting Scotland's ambitious net zero target. We want to see the organisations and individuals we fund become agents of change in the fair and equitable transformation of Scotland to a thriving, net-zero, climate-ready nation.

How do we define what Environmental Sustainability means?

Tackling the climate emergency can only be achieved through transformational, rather than incremental, change. Transformation requires the prioritisation of '**mitigation**', by reducing emissions and '**adaptation**', thinking about resilience, and responding to the impacts of climate risks on buildings, organisations, and practice. We believe that change must be fair and equitable, based on the principles of **climate justice**. We recognise the powerful role that the sectors we support have in influencing society through their **programming focus**, drawing on the potential for arts and creativity to help everyone to envisage alternative futures. More broadly, we need to ensure environmental impacts are central to developing **sustainable business models** in the creative and cultural sectors.

Why is this a priority?

Scotland is committed to becoming a net-zero nation that is resilient and adapted to the impacts of climate change, for the benefit of its environment, people, and prosperity. Because transformational action on climate change requires cultural change throughout society, we believe that arts and creativity are central to the public policy response, given their reach and potential to inspire and empower. Creative Scotland will continue to advocate for this wider role while supporting culture and creativity to adapt and to embed sustainable environmental practices that will contribute to achieving net-zero emissions.

National policy agendas

Our roles and responsibilities

In direct response to the UN Paris Agreement (2015), the Scottish Government declared a climate emergency and updated the Climate Change (Scotland) Act to include the 2045 net-zero target. All public bodies are now required by law to play their part by reducing their greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP). The Scottish Government's Programme for Government sets out that public sector funding should be conditional on leveraging in wider benefits such as the just transition to a net-zero economy. The Scottish Government Strategy aligns with other key national and international strategies and recognises the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel (IPCC) and the Climate Change Committee, as well as the aims of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Key work in this area

Climate Change Mitigation

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 outlines our national legally binding commitment to achieve net-zero by 2045, with interim greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 against a 1990 baseline. Following the national declaration of a climate emergency, many regions and cities have followed suit. Dumfries and Galloway Council have committed to be a net-zero region by 2025 while both Glasgow and the City of Edinburgh Council have committed to become net-zero cities by 2030. Inverness has committed to be carbon neutral by 2025.

Meeting these targets requires the creative and cultural sectors to operate in an as environmentally sustainable way as possible, prioritising:

- The reduction of carbon emissions resulting from travel in line with the Scottish Government's commitment to reduce car kilometres travelled by 20% by 2030. For organisations, this relates to staff travel, travel by artists, freelancers and contractors and audience travel
- The reduction of emissions resulting from energy consumption and utilities, including water use
- When no further emissions can be eradicated, consideration of how best to balance residual emissions through accredited programmes
- The eradication of waste sent to landfill and the adoption of the circular economy, ensuring waste is recycled and food waste separated as appropriate, including waste resulting from specific projects
- The defining and reduction of emission boundaries generated through the procurement of goods and services in supply chains

In recent years we have seen significant positive developments in the culture and creative sector. More emissions data is being collected and reported and organisations are getting better at ensuring its accuracy. There have been some impressive efforts by organisations to reduce energy consumption and more of our energy supply is coming from renewable sources. Nevertheless, the urgency to reduce emissions means that there is much more to do. We recognise that organisations of different scales and types will be at different points in their sustainability journeys and therefore plans for emissions reduction should be ambitious, but also realistic and relevant to organisations' business models and operating environment.

Residual Emissions

While working to better understand and reduce our organisational emissions, we also need to think about long-term planning for addressing our residual emissions.

The Scottish Government do not consider the offsetting of emissions as a replacement for emission reductions and that 'carbon credits'¹ should only be purchased after actions have been taken to reduce emissions to as close to zero as possible. They have also been clear that public bodies, including Creative Scotland should consider if the purchase of offsets² is the best use of public funds and if any offsetting is carried out, natural sequestration³ projects within Scotland should be prioritised. This means a move from offsetting to 'insetting'.⁴

We recognise that when no further emissions can be eradicated, it may be appropriate to balance the residual emissions through accredited programmes within Scotland such as those verified by the Woodland Carbon Code, the Peatland Code, or other such government backed codes which may develop in the future. This will ensure public money is spent on climate change mitigation to benefit people within Scotland, through nature-based carbon reduction projects. These can bring benefits to local economies, enhance biodiversity, and provide wider environmental benefits, in addition to contributing to progress towards our national emissions reduction targets.

Offsetting and insetting are evolving practices. Our position, which follows the current available **Scottish Government** guidance, will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

¹ The terms carbon credits and carbon offsets are often interchangeable, but they are different mechanisms. While carbon offsets focus on the removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere through investing in projects that will remove carbon emissions from the atmosphere e.g., tree planting, carbon credits focus on a reduction in greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere through investing in reducing an existing emissions source e.g. peatland restoration.

² Carbon offsets are used to counterbalance emissions of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases (GHGs) generated by an organisation's operational activities. Measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), offsets, or carbon 'credits', reduce or remove from the atmosphere the equivalent amount of CO₂ or other GHG generated by the organisation. Carbon offsets are externally verified and purchased/sold on a market.

³ The procedure of collecting and storing carbon dioxide, which can happen through both natural and manufacturing processes.

⁴ Carbon 'insets' are carbon and GHG management and reduction activities within the organisation's operational boundary on their own landholdings or, by agreement, on the wider public estate. While a wide range of insetting activities exist, the Scottish Government guidance focuses on nature-based insetting projects, for example peatland restoration or woodland creation.

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate change adaptation is different from mitigation. While mitigation tackles the causes of climate change, adaptation tackles the effects, some of which we are already experiencing. In the context of the culture and creative sector it means making changes, on an ongoing basis, based on risk and future projected changes in the climate.

We want to see the culture and creative sector make appropriate adjustments to their operations, including, for example improving the energy efficiency and the protection of buildings from climate risks. Organisations both with and without buildings should consider climate risks: severe weather can affect any part of the supply chain, including artist, staff and audience travel and touring; suppliers may be affected or may not be able to transport goods; insurance costs may rise.

Accordingly, sector organisations should include climate risks and plans to mitigate those risks in corporate and major project risk registers and work towards the development of a climate adaptation plan if this is yet in place. This will help to minimise risks that staff, artists and audiences may not be able to attend activity or events being cancelled due to weather events.

Climate Justice

Creative Scotland's own Climate Emergency and Sustainability plan recognises the importance of a fair and just approach to climate action. We believe that transformation to a net-zero society must be done in a way that is equitable and inclusive, making sure that existing inequalities are not perpetuated, or new inequalities created. Climate justice therefore takes a people-centred approach to climate change and treats it as a social, political and cultural issue as much as a scientific, technical and economic one. Those who are on the front line of climate change, the poorer and more disadvantaged in society – in Scotland, the UK and internationally – are generally those who have contributed least greenhouse gas emissions.

All parts of society should be capable and enabled to participate fully in the decision-making processes about climate change mitigation and adaptation, ensuring those most vulnerable to climate impacts are heard. Climate action should seek to reduce inequality overall and the costs and benefits of climate action should be shared fairly: those who have more resources should be asked to contribute more, and those who are most at risk should be most protected. International and intergenerational justice should form a strong part of this thinking. Every tonne of carbon emitted today in Scotland reduces availability for younger and future generations.

We believe climate justice should help shape the approach of the culture and creative sector to sustainable development. We accept that climate justice work at a developmental stage and is not yet well established within the sector. However, there is a strong relationship with sector approaches to progressing Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, for which there are established methodologies and practices which can be drawn on. Alongside changes that can be made quickly with short-term results there may be early actions to lay the foundations for later work.

Programming Focus

Engaging with cultural activity, as a participant, audience member or consumer, can strengthen the capabilities of individuals and communities to contribute to thinking and decision-making about our future. Artists can help imagine different futures and sector organisations can provide spaces for debate and discussion, both through their artistic and creative work and as civic society venues.

We know that the way we live has an impact on our environment and can pose challenges that affect our future. The reach and potential to engage and influence people presents an opportunity for the culture and creative sector to lead in changes in behaviours and practices that positively impact environmental sustainability. Culture and creativity reach a large number of people and hugely impact upon our broader national and political cultures. Cultural activity is not afraid to address complexity and confront some of societies major challenges in ways that are provocative and engaging. Creativity asks the critical questions rather than presenting technical solutions. These can often open up new dialogue and a better understanding of our society and the political context.

The Scottish Government Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change identifies the opportunity to *'Utilise the potential of the arts, creativity and heritage to inspire and empower the culture change'* needed to transform to net-zero. This aligns with the Scottish Government's Culture Strategy for Scotland which includes the aims to *'place culture as a central consideration across all policy areas, including reducing inequality and realising a greener and more innovative future'*.

A Nature Positive economy

Creative Scotland is committed to both significantly reducing the environmental impact of our sector's work and supporting the sustainability of creative businesses across all parts of Scotland. We see the two as clearly linked. Scotland aims to develop a wellbeing economy, and this can only be achieved if cultural value, social value and economic value are all treated as equal parts in our common objective for sustainable development. There can be no economic sustainability without environmental sustainability.

We believe that the early adoption of environmentally conscious sustainability practices will not only increase efficiency but will create new kinds of business opportunities for individuals and organisations working in the creative sectors. Integrating business and environmental sustainability is likely to require cultural and creative organisations to focus on business partnerships, both existing and new.

Recent Scottish Government guidance on Public Sector Leadership on the Global Climate Emergency highlights the need for organisations to demonstrate commitment, strong leadership and shared ownership of climate change action. It advises that climate change should be integrated into organisations' financial planning and reporting, and finance staff should be engaged, recommending *'incorporating sustainability into your organisation's financing strategy and communications'*.

Measuring the impact of travel is one element in a complex ecosystem to mitigate against environmental impact through changing consumption habits, eradicating waste and adaptation processes. Re-thinking established approaches to international working requires research, experimentation and investment, sharing good practice and failures. We want to ensure that international work undertaken by those working in the culture and creative sector is mindful and purposeful within the context of the climate emergency, but still remains inspiring and impactful.

Further information and supporting resources

Below are links to policies, guidance and research which may be helpful. Please note that it is not necessary to read these in order to apply but may help you understand the wider context in which your work fits:

- [Creative Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan](#)
- [Scottish Government Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change](#)
- [Scotland's Just Transition Commission](#)
- [Cultural Adaptations Adapting Our Culture Toolkit](#)
- [Creative Carbon Scotland's Guide to Adapting to Climate Change](#)



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Waverley Gate
2-4 Waterloo Place
Edinburgh EH1 3EG
Scotland UK

www.creativescotland.com
enquiries@creativescotland.com



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