Creative shifts

Empowering CULTURE
for sustainable living

OPEN METHOD OF
COORDINATION GROUP

This report summarises the work of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of EU Member States' experts on 'Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis', set up under the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026. It is based on the discussions, two dedicated surveys and information provided and approved by the members of the OMC expert group in the meetings held during 2024–2025, in addition to presentations given by external experts.

The report was collectively written by participant experts listed in Annex I.

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PREAMBLE

The cultural and creative sectors (CCS) comprise a remarkably broad range of activities across a diversity of skills, settings and media. Creative expression underpins European identity, improves the quality of life for European citizens, and helps to articulate a societal vision for future generations. In looking ahead, the global climate and environmental crises represent a significant challenge that requires urgent and effective responses by policymakers and the wider public. For those of us working in the CCS, this includes improving our environmental performance while also harnessing the power of cultural output to prompt a wider shift towards sustainability.

This shared sense of urgency inspired the work of the EU expert group of Member States, who came together in 2024–2025, aiming at accelerating the contribution of the CCS to the systemic transformation required in response to today's climate and energy emergencies. The climate and sustainability transformation is essentially a cultural transformation. In this regard, this Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group was established under the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 to consider the role of the CCS in stimulating the green transition.

The ecological transition is not merely a technical endeavour – it is fundamentally a cultural one. To address the climate and biodiversity crises, we as societies must reimagine how we live, produce and relate to the planet. The CCS, like all sectors and industries, have an impact on the environment, but they are uniquely positioned as drivers of systemic change through storytelling, imagination and behavioural influence.

One of the primary challenges for the CCS is the need to significantly reduce their own environmental footprint. Demonstrated by a collection of good practices, we can see that tangible environmental impact is achievable through energy-saving efforts, climate adaptation strategies, circular practices and sustainable mobility initiatives. Policymakers can support this important sectoral green transition by mobilising guidance, financial support and regulation.

There is a clear imperative for the EU to speak more boldly on the power of cultural and creative output to advance the global sustainability agenda. Building on existing initiatives and the upcoming Culture Compass for Europe, we need to embed cultural and creative approaches into the implementation of the European Green Deal and into processes supporting international environmental agreements and the sustainable development goals.

This report presents the output from the work of this expert group. It presents recommendations for policymakers and the CCS to accelerate the green transition within the sectors, and to strengthen the sectors' role in envisioning and creating a more sustainable world.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the result of the work on the 'Green transition of the cultural and creative sectors', carried out by the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of EU Member State experts during 2024 and 2025, as part of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026. The group adopted a multilayered methodological approach, combining plenary sessions, expert input, thematic subgroups and targeted surveys to outline good practices, assess policy tools and formulate recommendations to support the green transition of the CCS across Europe.

The accelerating environmental crisis driven by human activity, including global climate change and the alarming loss of biodiversity, poses a profound threat to global ecosystems and to human life and livelihoods. While much attention has been directed towards transformative action in sectors such as energy and transport, the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) also hold significant, yet under-recognised, potential to contribute meaningfully to the sustainability agenda. With their proven capacity to foster **public awareness**, create **emotional engagement** and inspire **behavioural change**, culture, creativity and the arts warrant more strategic and ambitious integration into climate action efforts. At the same time, emerging assessments of their ecological footprint underscore the urgency for the CCS to adopt stronger environmental practices. This report explores the sectors' ongoing shift towards sustainability, emphasising the critical role of culture, creativity and the arts in enabling the mindset shifts necessary for a just, inclusive and equitable green transition.

The structural framework of this report responds to the identified key factors promoting an effective green transition in the sector. The six chapters are laid out as follows.

1. **Engage. Empowering culture and creativity as drivers of change.** This chapter explores the collaborative advantage of strengthening the strategic alignment of the cultural, creative and environmental sectors, which can provide a win-win partnership for the benefit of society and the planet. The unique potential of creative and cultural expression to engage stakeholders on climate action is presented through the many examples of powerful messaging that the CCS are providing through novel channels and media.

2. **Assess. Effectively using tools and data for informed decision-making.** Gathering data enables operators to make plans and decisions informed by evidence and to monitor the results. A wide range of instruments – from carbon calculators to certifications and artificial intelligence applications – can support the planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable practices. In this way, progress can be captured and refined where necessary, advancing the green transition of the CCS. While our analysis reveals the benefits of informed decision-making and cross-sectoral alignment, it also warns against the risks of using tools without clear goals or user orientation. Ultimately, only a balanced, context-sensitive approach ensures that tools are practical, purpose-driven and aligned with a shared vision for sustainability in the CCS.

3. **Transform. Scale up good practices from the field.** The CCS can transform intentions into action by adopting and replicating effective sustainability practices. Real-world examples in our report demonstrate how CCS institutions and organisations across Europe are already embedding sustainability into their operations, infrastructure, audience engagement and creative production,

improving energy efficiency, embracing the circular economy and promoting sustainable mobility. The report also emphasises that successful approaches face challenges such as funding gaps, regulatory barriers and capacity limits – particularly for smaller players. Key findings in this area highlight the need for practical tools, cross-sector collaboration and tailored support to scale up impact and to integrate environmental responsibility into the core of operations in the CCS.

4. **Stimulate. Enable the CCS through policies and institutional action.** Public policy can effectively stimulate and regulate the green transition of the CCS by mobilising stakeholders, providing targeted support and designing smart legislation. To do so, there is a need for a threefold approach: building capacity within the sector; ensuring equitable financial and technical support (including through eco-conditionality); and creating light-touch regulatory frameworks tailored to the CCS's specific needs. Emphasising fairness, flexibility and shared responsibility, it is crucial to align policies across levels, scaling up existing tools and embedding sustainability into funding and training systems. With concrete examples from across Europe, our analysis highlights how smart governance can enable cultural transformation while avoiding burdensome or inequitable outcomes.

5. **Amplify. Cooperating and learning from others about the green transition.** Successful practices and knowledge must be amplified within the CCS to achieve a meaningful green transition. Strategic communication, practical tools, professional networks and capacity-building efforts are crucial in sharing effective approaches across diverse cultural contexts and national boundaries.

6. **Advocate. Mainstreaming the CCS into national and EU climate action.** National and EU institutions should be better aware of the value of the CCS on the journey towards net zero and increase their understanding of the support that these require to realise their full potential as change makers. Furthermore, it is important for the EU to speak with one voice in international forums, as a global change maker, advocating strongly for the inclusion of the voice of the CCS in the journey towards 'a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace' [1].

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

◌ Action at the EU level

⚑ Action at the Member State level

Based on the research, study and reflection during our work, the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group makes the following recommendations to policymakers at the EU and Member State levels. The recommendations are intended to prompt effective action across three key domains:

- establishing culture and creativity as keystones of sustainability;
- mobilising the cultural and creative sectors (CCS);
- supporting the green transition.

These recommendations should be actioned by policymakers to stimulate the green transition within the CCS, which will enhance the positive influence of the sectors on sustainability while also empowering the sectors to reduce their own environmental impact.

Establishing culture and creativity as keystones of sustainability

1. Position culture at the core of the policy response to ecological challenges

◌ **1.1.** Ensure that the power of creative expression to envision possible futures and engage Europe's citizens is visible in key sustainability policies. This should include embedding cultural principles and creative initiatives into the transformative agenda for achieving climate neutrality (European Green Deal, Clean Industrial Deal) and the Culture Compass for Europe.

◌ **1.2.** Highlight the role of creative expression in addressing ecological challenges, including climate change and biodiversity loss, in key strategic documents for the cultural sector. For example, the forthcoming EU Work Plan for Culture and the next AgoraEU programme for the CCS should include appropriate measures to foster and support engagement by the sectors in this area.

2. Recognise culture as a pillar of the global sustainable development framework

◌ **2.1.** EU Member States and EU institutions should press for the identification of culture as a stand-alone priority in future global sustainable development frameworks.

◌ **2.2.** EU Member States and EU institutions should assign roles to the CCS to foster citizen engagement and inspire action towards meeting global environmental commitments such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3. Strengthen coordination between culture and environment policy domains

⚑ **3.1.** At the national level, nominate a focal point for culture in the climate/environment ministry and a counterpart role on climate and biodiversity action in the culture ministry.

◌ **3.2.** At the EU level, establish an ongoing knowledge-sharing and policy advisory initiative (in the form of an informal network) on the green transition for the CCS, building on this OMC.

⚑ ◌ **3.3.** Dedicated green-focused contact persons should be appointed to major cultural funding programmes. In addition, green training should be provided for funding advisors so they can help professionals in the CCS to develop high-quality greening strategies.

Mobilising the CCS at the EU and national levels

4. Use culture and creativity to drive climate and biodiversity action

4.1. Leverage the innovative power of the CCS to inspire change in public attitudes and behaviour though cultural initiatives focused on climate and environmental issues.

4.2. Integrate culture-led solutions addressing climate change and biodiversity loss into national adaptation strategies and plans.

5. Promote the role of artists and creatives in ecological and climate action

5.1. Foster and support cultural programmes addressing ecological challenges such as climate change and biodiversity decline to engage society in taking the necessary action.

5.2. Establish green residencies for artists and creatives, working with environmental professionals, to foster mutual understanding and knowledge about the potential of creative output to tackle this topic, including building links with local communities.

6. Embed environmental criteria into cultural funding frameworks

6.1. Introduce eco-conditionality across funding programmes for the CCS, to ensure that good practices on climate and biodiversity are embedded into funded initiatives. Ensure this action is proportional to the scale of the initiative and provides support for applicants.

Supporting the green transition at the EU and national levels

7. Enable cultural agents to lead the green transition

7.1. Develop programmes and initiatives to support artists and cultural agents in acquiring knowledge and skills for managing the green transition. Integrate sustainability into the core training of artists and creatives, making it a foundational professional competency.

7.2. Share evidence-based good practices from within the CCS to inspire and inform new practices, and to mitigate the sense of risk from making changes.

7.3. Build on existing initiatives to develop an EU online platform to disseminate tools and share good practices, aimed at smaller CCS organisations with limited sustainability expertise. In line with the EU union of skills strategy, encourage cross-sectoral initiatives towards the green transition.

8. Improve sectoral sustainability funding

8.1. Give cultural agents the necessary resources to lead the green transition by providing additional sustainability funding, on top of the regular budgets for culture.

8.2. Raise awareness within the CCS of the available funding opportunities across the breadth of sustainability support frameworks.

8.3. Develop a call in the current Creative Europe programme dedicated to building skills for greening the sector; consider a similar call within other programmes (such as Erasmus+, LIFE+, Horizon Europe) targeted at the CCS.

8.4. Review existing subsidy schemes in the CCS to identify any rules or conditions that hinder sustainability and revise these to remove any policy conflict.

9. Introduce carbon footprint tracking for major cultural events and platforms

9.1. Based on the successful experience of the European audiovisual carbon calculator, develop within Creative Europe simple, standardised carbon footprint calculators for all CCS subsectors, adaptable for national and local use.

9.2. Require large-scale cultural events to measure and publish their carbon footprint, with the long-term goal of establishing EU-wide emission ceilings.

9.3. Undertake research and monitoring to build understanding of the emissions associated with digital cultural platforms – to inform innovation and regulation towards decoupling growth in this area from environmental impact.

9.4. Encourage EU Member States to define national emission factors to support consistent measurement of carbon footprints in the CCS.

INTRODUCTION

The accelerating climate and environmental crises caused by human activity, including the unprecedented loss of biodiversity, constitute an unparalleled threat to the sustainability of life and ecosystems across the planet. The scale and speed of the unfolding emergency demand transformative change across every sector and domain of society.

While significant attention has rightly been focused on industrial, energy and transport systems, the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) possess a powerful – yet under-recognised – potential to contribute to this transformation. The growing recognition of the CCS's ability to catalyse public awareness, emotional engagement and behavioural change makes a strong case for more targeted and ambitious action in this area.

In addition, recent assessments of the ecological footprint of the CCS at large – including culture as a reason to use transportation and culture on digital devices – now point to the fact that the CCS are not a negligible contributor of carbon emissions. This calls for stronger ecological action in the sectors.

This report examines the ongoing shifts within the CCS towards more environmentally sustainable practices, while highlighting the still largely untapped potential of culture, creativity and the arts to inspire the mindset shifts and social imagination necessary for a just and inclusive green transition.

At the heart of this report lies the conviction that aligning cultural and environmental policy frameworks offers unique opportunities to strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between culture and climate action – a synergy that, if better harnessed, can drive meaningful change for the benefit of both humanity and the planet.

Open Method of Coordination mandate

Recognising the critical need to address the CCS's role in the green transition, an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member State experts was established by the Council of the European Union under the EU plan for culture 2023–2026. The group was mandated to consider how to stimulate the green transition of the CCS, with a particular emphasis on the energy crisis.

The overall aim of this OMC group is to define ways to identify effective policy solutions and policy tools or strategies to support and accompany the CCS in the green transition at the regional, national and EU levels [2]. In addition, the mandate of this group explicitly recognises the dual imperative of ensuring the CCS are integrated into the green transition and leveraging their inherent capacities to contribute to a more sustainable future. The mandate emphasised three working methods:

- to 'collect good practices and examples, followed by a deep analysis of the most recent policy strategies and initiatives developed at regional, national and European levels to support and accompany the CCS in the green transition';

- to 'assess the findings collected through recent initiatives, gather additional examples and exchange expertise in the field of regional and national practices and methods for greening the CCS';

- to 'make recommendations on how to bring results to the next stage at regional, national and European levels', based on the previous steps' findings.

The group was tasked with building upon the outcomes of the previous OMC groups that addressed the cultural dimension of sustainable development [3] and the strengthening of cultural heritage resilience for climate change [4].

Methodological outline

The working group has adopted a multifaceted methodological approach, including plenary sessions, expert presentations, thematic subgroup activities focused on specific policy areas (outlining good practices, enabling and regulating, tools and data, mainstreaming European Green Deal, audience and outreach) and a structured data collection process through targeted surveys. All of this has enabled a detailed analysis and the development of specific policy recommendations.

A significant component of the methodological framework involved the design, dissemination and analysis of different surveys that, together with other analysis and research, contributed to collecting a wider spectrum of responses across the region. During February and March 2025, the group launched two surveys to produce an overview of the state of play in EU Member States, to identify good strategies and practices and to discover gaps and needs in supporting the green transition.

Recognising the need for differentiated data input, one survey was specifically targeted at policymakers from both cultural and environmental institutions within Member States, gathering information on existing public policies relevant to the green transition in the sectors. The second survey, more comprehensive, was aimed at selected cultural agents, exploring a broader range of issues aligned with the thematic areas of the OMC group. The dissemination strategy for these surveys involved direct outreach to policymakers within the OMC group for the targeted policy survey, while the survey for cultural agents was distributed more broadly through relevant networks and channels.

In total, 31 policymakers' surveys were received from 19 countries: 19 of the surveys representing the cultural policy domain and another 12 from environment-related institutions. The survey targeting cultural agents and institutions resulted in a substantial dataset, gathering 170 responses from a diverse range of stakeholders – including public institutions, private organisations, civil society stakeholders, cultural associations and independent artists. These respondents function at various levels: local, regional, national and transnational.

Figure 1: CCS subsectors' representation within the cultural agents' survey replies, in number of mentions.

What subsector(s) of the CCS is your organisation working in?

Subsector	Mentions
Performing arts	60
Music	50
Libraries and museums	47
Festivals	40
Visual arts	36
Tangible and intangible cultural heritage	29
Architecture	18
Artistic crafts	18
Audiovisual (*)	18
Design (including fashion design)	17
Archives	13
Books and publishing	10
Literature	9

(*) including film, television, video games and multimedia

**Figure 2: Cultural organisations'
survey respondents, by type of entity,
in numer of mentions.**

53
Civil society organisation /
cultural association

24
Cultural entreprise /
private sector

82
Public
institution

*What type of entity are
you representing?*

3
Independent artist /
consultant
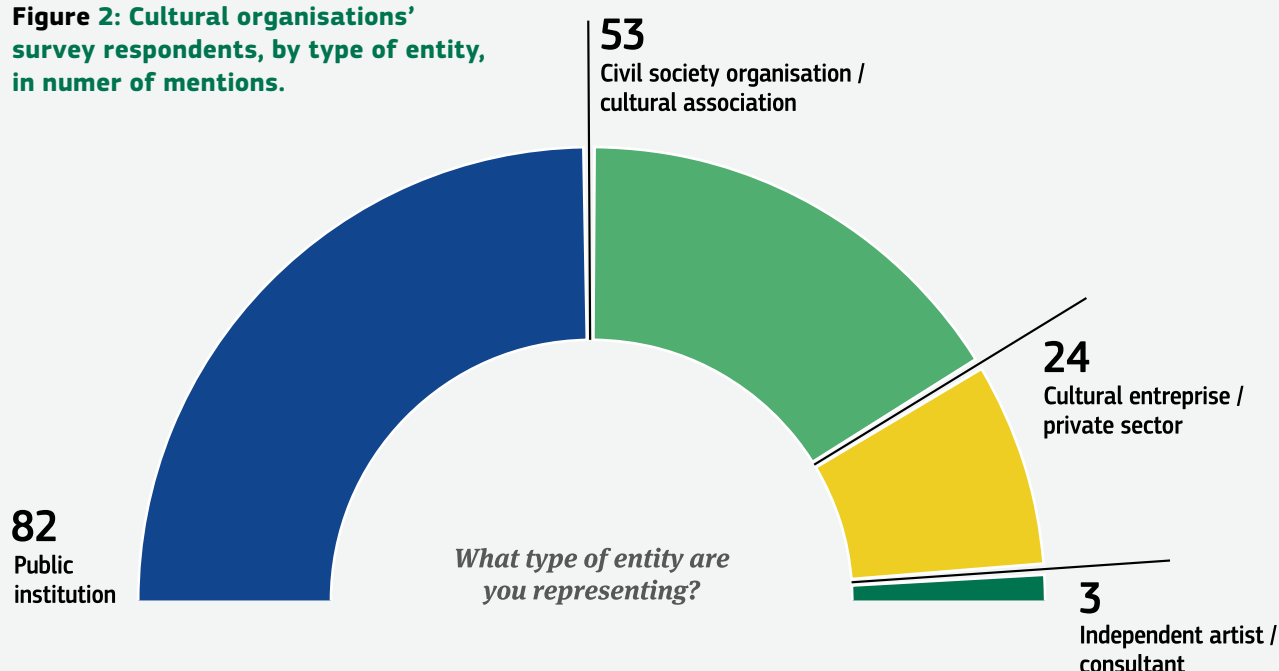
Nearly half of the responses (48 %) came from public institutions. This was followed by 31 % from civil society organisations and cultural associations, reflecting the greening trends within these stakeholders. The private sector and cultural enterprises contributed 14 % of the total responses. In terms of subsectors, the top five represented were performing arts, music, libraries and museums, festivals, and the visual arts. This provided an enormous amount of updated information that helped produce a broad picture of the CCS's commitment to the greening issue.

Report overview

The structural framework of this report responds to the key factors identified in promoting an effective green transition in the sectors. The six chapters include a detailed description of culture as driver of change (**Engage**); tools aiming at making decisions (**Assess**); the identification of good practices from the field (**Transform**); communication, a focused analysis on policies and the role of public institutions (**Stimulate**); cooperating and learning from others about the green transition (**Amplify**); and mainstreaming the CCS into national and EU climate action and into the European Green Deal through both implementation and inspiration (**Advocate**).

Endnotes

(1) Earth Charter International, 'The Earth Charter', Earth Charter website, accessed 28 August 2025, https://earthcharter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/echarter_english.pdf.

(2) Council of the European Union, Open Method of Coordination Group of Member States' experts on 'Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis' – Mandate, 15 January 2024, accessed 28 August 2025, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5456-2024-INIT/en/pdf.

(3) European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Stormy Times – Nature and humans – Cultural courage for change – 11 messages for and from Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/90729.

(4) European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change – Where the European Green Deal meets cultural heritage*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/44688.

1.

ENGAGE

EMPOWERING CULTURE AND CREATIVITY AS DRIVERS OF CHANGE

This chapter explores the collaborative advantage of strengthening the strategic alignment of the cultural and environmental sectors, which can provide a win-win partnership for the benefit of society and the planet. In particular, the unique potential of creative and cultural expression to engage stakeholders on climate action is considered, along with examples of how the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) are already presenting powerful messaging through novel channels and media.

1.1. Engaging

Engaging is setting a clear path between being interested in something to becoming active and involved. **Engage** gives us a sense of a crossroads, of a moment for decision-making – a change in the rhythm. It seemed like a clear point of entry for the topic we address in this report.

1.2. The cultural and creative sectors

The CCS in Europe include a remarkably broad range of activities. Defined as a transversal domain encompassing a broad spectrum of activities, it means all sectors for which the activities are based on cultural values and/or artistic and other creative expression, whether those activities are market- or non-market-oriented. Those activities include the development, the creation, the production, the dissemination and the preservation of goods and services that embody cultural, artistic or other creative expression, along with related functions such as education or management. It comprises architecture,

archives, libraries, museums, artistic crafts and the extensive audiovisual field, including film, television, video games and multimedia. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion), festivals, music, literature, the performing arts (such as theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and the visual arts also form integral parts of these diverse sectors [5].

It is important to recognise that these sectors are not static: they are a dynamic and evolving landscape, particularly influenced by social changes and the rapid advancements in digital technologies that have transformed how cultural goods and services are created, distributed and consumed. This inherent dynamism highlights the complexity of understanding both the environmental impact and the potential for positive change within the CCS.

These cultural and creative spheres are spaces of creation, interpretation, expression and dialogue, reflecting diverse cultural identities, fostering social cohesion and playing a crucial role in innovation, local development, external relations and cooperation.

The contribution of culture extends beyond aesthetics or entertainment: all these creative processes and activities are essential drivers of critical thinking, intercultural dialogue and civic engagement. Culture and the construction of democracy are clearly interlinked [6].

Moreover, in the cultural and creative field, there is not a single specific common profile: thousands of players, entities and companies in the cultural sphere vary greatly in scale, ranging from individual artists, who may even combine their artistic vocation with other professional careers, to national-scale cultural institutions. This broad spectrum of stakeholders, in terms of size and possibilities, generates different environmental impacts, conditioning their ability to integrate

into the green transition and potentially requiring structural changes or investment.

Finally, a large part of the CCS relies on public funding, which points to the clear need for and possibility of involving cultural policies in other areas of clear public interest, such as the promotion of greener practices.

Why should the cultural and creative sectors engage?

Cultural and creative organisations represent a significant weight within the EU economy, representing 6.3 % of all businesses ([7]). In 2022, the two million cultural enterprises in the EU generated EUR 199 billion, which was 2 % of the total value added in the business economy ([8]). The CCS are also a major source of employment, with 7.8 million people employed in the CCS across the EU in 2023 ([9]). Greening efforts in the CCS can help boost their competitiveness, while harnessing and increasing their positive societal impact. However, it is interesting to note that working in the CCS is often characterised by precarious and short-term contracts, with a high prevalence of self-employed professionals.

The environmental impact of these sectors in Europe could appear relatively low compared to other industrial ecosystems. However, the CCS are responsible for around 1 to 3 % of the total industrial environmental impact, and it is also important to note that such impact has increased over time (2011–2020) in absolute terms, mostly due to the shift to digitalisation and online and streaming services, which require data centres that use a lot of energy and resources. The CCS are part of the world's digital storage and transmission system, which is of concern as digital services are one of the sectors for which the carbon footprint is predicted to grow ([10]). On top of that, culture is among the reasons to use transportation – one of the sectors with the highest greenhouse gas emissions sector in the EU ([11]).

Last, but not least, the CCS hold a crucial place in the social fabric of European communities, and are instrumental in shaping culture, values and perceptions across the region. Engagement with culture and artistic expression has a positive impact on individual and collective well-being, contributing to social health. This multifaceted social value underscores the importance of the CCS in building resilient and inclusive societies. In this sense, numerous international organisations have emphasised the role of culture as a global public good. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) spearheaded this idea, through the cultural policies forum Mondiacult 2022, and arrived at a declaration where the international community requested the United Nations 'to firmly anchor culture as a global public good, and to integrate it as a specific goal in its own right in the development agenda beyond 2030' ([12]). The European Commission ([13]) and the Council of the European Union ([14]) have also defended the idea of culture as an 'essential public good'.

In fact, culture has undoubtedly been a key factor in the construction of Europe and its democratic institutions, and it fosters a sense of belonging through forms of dialogue anchored in creative experiences. Culture and cultural heritage are vehicles for fostering a sense of belonging and togetherness among the different communities in Europe. In this regard, culture is also in a position to reinforce people's sense of shared responsibility around the importance of sustainable management of common resources and to mobilise collective action to protect them from over exploitation and destruction. In other words, culture provides a clear social added value, promoting creative spaces to enable mutual understanding, and opening alternative discourses for a desirable, sustainable future.

Figure 3: Most important environmental issues for the CCS as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

100
Adopting circular economy principles

84
Increasing recycling

78
Climate adaptation measures

130
Improving energy efficiency

61
Pollution prevention measures

19
Biodiversity improvements

In terms of the green transition, which are the most important environmental issues for the CCS?
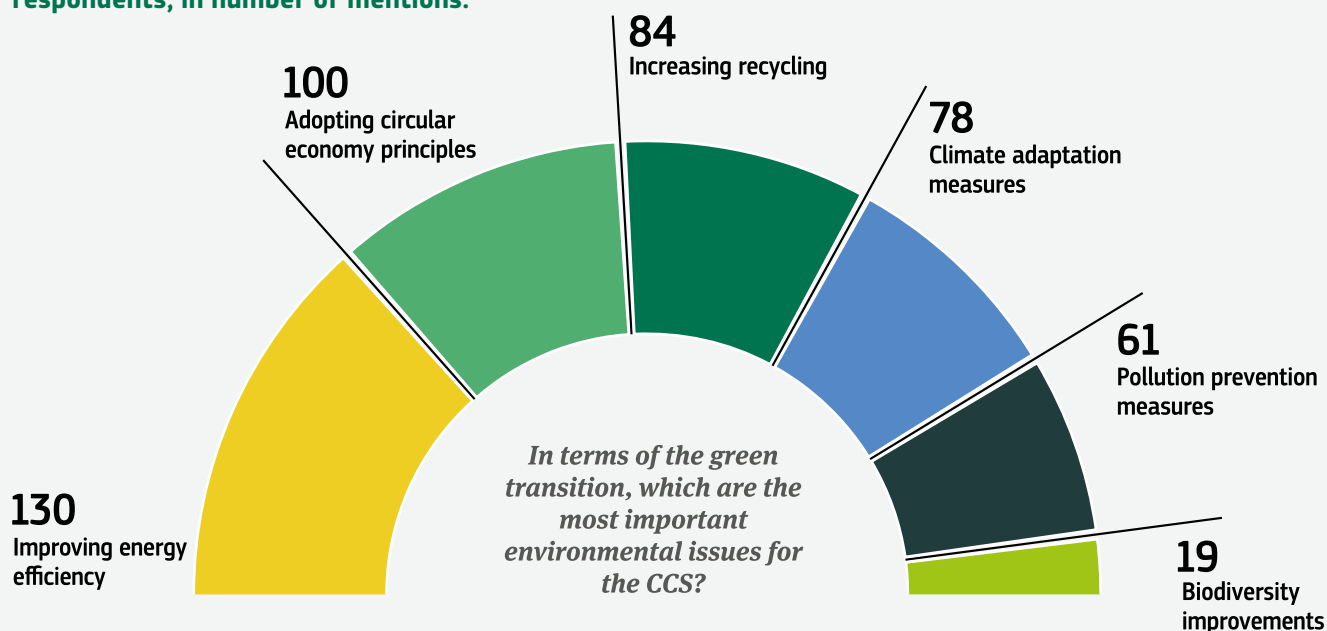
1.3. The green challenge

Europe is currently facing a range of significant environmental challenges that demand urgent attention. These include a concerning decline in biodiversity, with increasing landscape fragmentation damaging vital and traditional habitats. The continent's resource consumption continues to surpass internationally considered sustainable levels, contributing to environmental degradation.

The impacts of climate change are increasingly evident in the different regions of Europe, manifesting in water scarcity that affects various economic activities and different communities, and in more frequent and intense heatwaves that lead to premature deaths, risks to food security, worsening social inequalities and threats to cultural heritage. Specific challenges such as prolonged droughts, sea-level rise and devastating wildfires further underscore the severity of the situation.

While some progress has been made towards achieving environmental targets, greater and more concerted efforts are essential to reaching the EU's overarching goals of climate neutrality and zero pollution, to halting the loss of biodiversity and to meeting its commitments under global accords.

European citizens are increasingly aware of and concerned about these environmental issues, expressing support for EU environmental legislation as a necessary tool for protection. This public awareness creates a mandate for decisive action across all sectors, including the CCS.

Issues and strengths in the culture and creative sectors

Energy, transport, resource consumption, waste, pollution and habitat degradation appear as the main and most widespread problems identified by the CCS regarding environmental processes and climate change, similarly to other economic sectors.

Indeed, the CCS represent 2 % of the EU's gross value added ([15]) – which is a good proxy for their share of the carbon footprint. They are a heavy user of digital equipment and of transportation, both important contributors to greenhouse gas emissions.

The environmental challenges faced by the CCS unfold within a framework that is unique to their nature. Cultural and creative processes often rely on specific venues and on the consumption of materials – such as those used in set design, exhibitions or costumes – which inevitably contribute to their ecological footprint. Additionally, the environmental impact of audiences attending cultural events, often overlooked, is a significant aspect that must be addressed. At the same time, the increasingly widespread – yet mistaken – belief that digital and online participation comes with no environmental cost must also be challenged.

Mobility is another defining feature of the CCS, particularly the international movement of artists and creators, which enables cultural exchange, artistic growth, professional development and access to new audiences, making it a fundamental component of the sector's vitality. However, while essential for cultural

Figure 4: Major financial challenges for implementing green practices as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

Lack of available funding	98
High initial investment costs	56
Balancing short-term costs with long-term benefits	52
Complexity of funding programmes	50
Lack of access to or priority for cultural institutions in funding schemes	48
Requirement for investment from within own organisation	39
Funding is only for short-term initiatives with temporary impact	36
Cost of training and development for staff	33
Return on investment concerns – savings not clear	27
Ongoing operational expenses	27
Regulatory and compliance costs	16

What are the major financial challenges for implementing green practices?

Figure 5: The interventions most necessary for stimulating the green transition, in number of mentions.

What is most needed for the CCS to adopt greening practices?

Policies at the national level	24
Financial programmes	21
Monitoring and evaluation systems	21
More capacity-building and learning processes	20
Open-source tools facilitated by international and/or European organisations	15
Tax exemptions	12
Support from international institutions	11
More commitment from sector and agents	11

exchange and professional development, it also carries an environmental impact that cannot be ignored. In the context of the ecological crisis, there is a growing need to reimagine touring and mobility practices in ways that align with more sustainable approaches.

This raises broader questions about innovation in the sectors. Cultural narratives often celebrate innovation as one of the CCS's core strengths: exhibitions must be updated, performances reinvented, and artistic experiences constantly refreshed. But in light of today's ecological crisis, the question is not only how to innovate, but also how to do so responsibly: we must ask whether the sectors can channel their creativity towards innovation that serves both society and the planet by limiting their environmental footprint without compromising their vitality.

At the same time, this leads to complex and important debates on how to balance sustainability with artistic freedom. For example, questioning the 'throwaway' mentality in set design may lead to reduced opportunities for artists to create something entirely new for each production. This could be perceived as a constraint on their creative resources and freedom. Addressing these tensions will be crucial in redefining sustainability not as a limitation, but as a catalyst for new forms of artistic expression and systemic innovation within the CCS.

In addition, the CCS face distinct challenges in the context of the green transition, including documented limitations in accessing dedicated funding mechanisms for greening strategies. Challenges also include a lack of monitoring and updated data on the sectors' environmental impact, limited financial resources for the green transition and the need for training and technical support. Ethical and aesthetic dilemmas also arise regarding how to represent the ecological crisis without falling into collapse narratives or greenwashing.

The inherent heterogeneity of cultural organisations (from large-scale festivals to individual entrepreneur-led microenterprises) creates complexities for the uniform implementation of sustainability measures. Over 96 % of cultural employees work in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with almost 90 % working in small businesses and microenterprises [16], which face difficulties due to fragmented funding schemes and a lack of specific guidance.

Furthermore, policy considerations must address the identified tension between the sectors' operational requirements for mobility and exchange, and the overarching imperative for emission reduction. Specific contextual factors relevant to the CCS, such as the material requirements for cultural heritage restoration and the need for potential policy exemptions, require explicit consideration.

Figure 6: Organisations having increased their investment in sustainability over the past five years, in numer of mentions.

Has your organisation increased investment in sustainability over the past five years?

150 Yes	**13** No	**7** I don't know

The principle of climate justice and the differences among Member States throughout the continent must also inform policy development, acknowledging the varying capacities within the CCS to adopt sustainable practices.

Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, many cultural players are already taking the initiative, using their platforms to inspire environmental awareness and induce change at the local and transnational levels. They are not only adjusting their operations but also shaping new collective mindsets, making sustainability an embedded, lived and co-created cultural value.

Culture and creativity as drivers of change

The CCS possess a unique and transformative capacity to drive societal change, particularly in fostering new mindsets and behaviours essential for addressing the climate and environmental crises. Their ability to engage, inspire and mobilise communities positions them as pivotal agents in the transition towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.

The European Commission acknowledges this potential, emphasising that culture facilitates social inclusion, freedom of expression, identity building and civil empowerment, while also contributing to economic growth and political participation [17]. Moreover, culture serves as an enabler and driver of sustainable development, recognised as a 'global public good' at UNESCO's Mondiacult 2022 conference [18].

A 2023 policy brief, 'The societal value of the arts and culture', highlights that the arts and culture are strong agents of change, particularly when interconnected with well-being, mental health and inclusion. It also emphasises their role in introducing new policy avenues [19].

Furthermore, the Commission's report 'Culture and creative sectors and industries driving green transition and facing the energy crisis' underscores the power of culture and creativity to inspire change by creating new narratives, embedding sustainability in other industries, and inspiring action with an engaging vision for a greener society [20].

Culture is therefore transversal, and other policy and economic sectors also need to understand that culture creates the framework for a new urgent community contract towards a more sustainable society.

Cultural institutions are uniquely placed to engage the public in sustainability dialogues and to model sustainable practices. Indeed, the CCS are already playing a role by experimenting with greener production methods, reducing carbon footprints at festivals and events, and engaging audiences in climate action campaigns. The growing cultural response to ecological challenges shows that the CCS are not only reactive but also anticipatory – helping to shift world views and behaviours through storytelling, participatory experiences and symbolic innovation.

In this context, public institutions have a decisive role to play in scaling up these efforts. Committed and forward-looking governance can offer cultural operators the necessary support, legitimacy and visibility to lead the green transition in their communities. Governments should act as enablers: removing barriers, offering incentives and actively involving the CCS in broader sustainability policymaking.

Considering these insights, it is imperative to integrate the CCS into broader transformation policies. Recognising their power in driving societal change and embedding CCS elements into the EU's broader transformation agendas beyond the cultural sphere are essential for fostering a sustainable and resilient future [21].

By harnessing the unique capabilities of culture and creativity, we can catalyse the necessary shifts in perception and behaviour to address the pressing challenges of our time.

In the journey towards climate change and sustainability, it is incumbent on society to fully acknowledge the role of the CCS as change makers.

The climate and sustainability transformation is essentially a massive cultural challenge. Our culture influences the way we interact with our environment – reflected in our consumption habits, our ideas about nature, what we value as meaningful and what we think is possible and impossible

To prompt this change, we need to think big, think differently and, most importantly, think creatively. It is possible for the CCS to make the intangible tangible – i.e. what life could be like in a more sustainably focused world. First of all, the CCS must play an active role in ensuring their own sustainability – it is imperative that the sectors ensure it and implement all relevant areas of the European Green Deal and Member States' own regulations. Secondly, the CCS have the skills to reimagine their own sectors' future along with a broader contribution to societies at large: promoting a positive, inclusive and innovative approach to the transformative journey that we all must take, offering inspiration for the world we would all like to inhabit in the future, as stressed by the 'No future without culture' campaign [22].

Cultural activities are critical to delivering effective communication on climate change because they can make complex and abstract issues more relatable and can also help to build emotional connections with the subject. In this way, there is a unique opportunity to utilise the CCS to create messaging that engages the public and policymakers in novel and fresh ways. Approaches such as storytelling and visual installations provide alternate channels of engagement and can break through apathy and indifference built up from the repeated delivery of ponderous, fact-heavy messaging. In addition, creative strategies such as gamification or interactive exhibits can turn passive audiences into active participants.

Creative and interpretative expression can also help to connect with diverse audiences by providing accessible interpretation and distillation of complex data and scientific concepts. Furthermore, by applying local art forms, languages and values to the issue, the creative process also propagates culturally relevant messaging that can reach and influence different communities and demographics. In this way, the CSS play a core role in delivering on the EU's Just Transition objectives.

The artworks and projects below provide examples of striking and powerful climate messaging, illustrating the variety of ways that the CCS can engage audiences on climate change.

Recent research from Ireland on the Creative Climate Action Fund (described below) confirms that culture and the arts are powerful catalysts for climate action as they can bridge the gap between knowledge and engagement, shape inclusive, community-driven responses to the climate crisis and guide equitable climate policy at the national and international levels [23] [24]. The research noted that multiple, highly effective artistic and cultural climate action interventions can have cumulative, scalable impact and lead to broad societal transformation, and that the arts, culture and creativity are strategic, evidence-based vehicles for inclusive and equitable climate action.

JANCOVICI - BLAIN

WORLD WITHOUT END

Europe
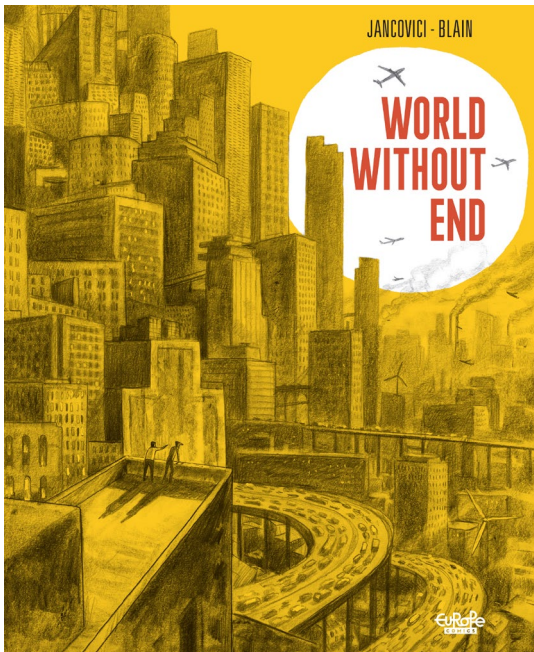
**World Without End:
An Illustrated Guide to
the Climate Crisis,
France**

A graphic novel by
Jean-Marc Jancovici and
Christophe Blain that
explores the challenges
of climate change and
energy consumption
through engaging
illustrations.

**Support,
Italy**

Lorenzo Quinn's sculpture of
two giant hands rising from a
canal symbolises humankind's
capacity to destroy the world
and an equal ability to save it.

I DON'T BELIEVE IN
GLOBAL WARMING

**I Don't Believe in Global
Warming,
United Kingdom**

This Banksy artwork appeared
in the aftermath of the
Copenhagen UN Climate
Summit, conveying the artist's
view on the world's inadequate
response to climate change.

Elegy for the Arctic, Italy

In 2016, Italian composer Ludovico Einaudi wrote a piece to draw attention to the problems of melting glaciers and rising sea levels and to demand responsive action.

The glacier melt series, Iceland

The glacier melt series 1999/2019 by Olafur Eliasson brings together 30 pairs of photographs from 1999 and 2019 to reveal the dramatic impact of global warming.

Línte na Farraige, Ireland

A series of coastal light installations across Ireland by Finnish artists Timo Aho and Pekka Niittyvirta, indicating the projected rise in sea levels from future storm surges.

Creative Climate Action Fund, Ireland

Since 2021, Ireland has invested EUR 7.8 million in 57 diverse creative climate action projects. The fund supports creative, cultural and artistic projects that build awareness around climate change and empower citizens to make meaningful behavioural changes. The lens of creativity offers a more positive, hopeful approach to engagement with communities and towards our shared vision of a better tomorrow.

The fund has helped communities connect emotionally with the climate crisis – it has helped to bridge the gap between abstract, often overwhelming, scientific data and personal, community-level engagement and action. Furthermore, the research accompanying this initiative significantly supports the growing evidence base for the power of culture in moving towards a more sustainable future [25]. The study highlights that art and creativity offer a distinctive motivational framework for engaging with climate action by establishing a profound personal and emotional connection with the participants. This research demonstrates how creative and artistic elements are crucial in bringing together stakeholders across society to collaborate on meaningful climate and sustainability initiatives.

https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/en/publication/creative-climate-action/

Community is at the heart of this cultural transformation. This research pointed to the fact that social cohesion is a major determinant in the acceptance of climate mitigation policies and that the CCS are particularly adept at creating communities of both place and practice that support social cohesion.

With respect to the unique role that artists and creative can play, several Member States, along with local authorities and cultural operators, have developed promising models of green residencies, with four features in common: they respect and value the independence of the creative process; they fund it adequately; they create spaces for artists and creatives to meet scientists and sustainability experts first-hand so as to enrich their perspectives; and they connect strongly with local communities considered as both citizens and cultural audiences.

1.4. Key messages

Global society faces a triple planetary crisis, comprising climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The response to these challenges requires **structural changes** across all sectors, including the CCS. While not the largest sectoral polluter, nonetheless the CCS do have an increasing measurable environmental impact that must be addressed without compromising the core societal function of cultural engagement.

One of the primary challenges for the CCS is the need to significantly reduce their own **environmental footprint**. This includes addressing energy consumption in venues and productions, minimising waste generation from events and activities, and reducing emissions associated with transportation and digital operations.

But the green transition is not only a technical challenge – it is also a **cultural transformation**. Addressing the climate and biodiversity crises requires our society to **rethink how we live, produce and relate to the planet**.

Culture has the power to **envision alternative futures**, including hopeful ones. Creative expression and storytelling contain the potential to communicate about climate change and other environmental challenges in novel and engaging ways. Offering an alternative style to dense fact-heavy statements, artistic approaches to messaging can better engage the public and overcome indifference, often across a

wider range of societal and cultural groupings, in line with the ambitions of the Just Transition.

The CCS are uniquely positioned to lead this shift through the adoption of greener practices, the generation of innovative solutions and the development of narratives than can **inspire collective transformation and behavioural influence**, and by using creative tools to foster dialogue and address environmental issues through policy and community involvement.

Providing support for and sharing knowledge about climate and biodiversity issues are critical to **empowering the CCS to present a convincing and engaging green future vision** – so they can inspire society through creative material. This approach can also build positive feedback between 'culture for green' (creatives offering a sustainable future vision) and 'green for culture' (CCS operators working more sustainably).

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2.

ASSESS

EFFECTIVELY USING TOOLS AND DATA FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING.

This chapter highlights the crucial role of tools and data in advancing the ecological transition of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS). A wide range of instruments are presented – from carbon calculators to certifications and AI applications – that support the planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable practices. While emphasising the benefits of informed decision-making and cross-sectoral alignment, the chapter also serves as a warning against the risks of using tools without clear goals or user orientation. Ultimately, it shows that a balanced, context-sensitive approach is called for, one that ensures tools are practical, purpose-driven and aligned with a shared vision for sustainability in the CCS.

2.1. Assessing: tools and instruments

Tools and data play an important role in supporting the green transformation in the CCS. In this report, 'tools' and 'data' are understood as instruments that prompt users to take action to enable them to carry out specific tasks and to make further decisions based on the results. A clear benefit of using a tool is that it provides a framework to follow in terms of developing measures for the green transition. In the environmental field, there are many tools designed to measure the impact of measures an organisation can or should take in greening their working environment. This helps organisations to navigate the complex operational and regulatory context when greening their day-to-day work.

According to research undertaken within this OMC, tools and data are mostly used by employees and managers of CCS institutions (54 %), followed by others (20 %) and clients (15 %), whereas funding providers or policymakers only make up 11 % of users – multiple answers were possible in the survey.

Cultural institutions and funding bodies can share the same goals when it comes to using tools and data, meaning that a requirement from funding bodies for a greenhouse gas balance highlights the necessity for cultural institutions to employ suitable tools to generate it.

More than half of the cultural institutions surveyed (62 %) affirmed that they monitor changes in relevant in-house data and indicators to evaluate the success of greening initiatives, confirming the crucial role of tools and data within the process of transformation.

The survey explored how the data generated by the tools enable informed decision-making, and responses from cultural institutions included the following concepts: better understanding of the institution's own environmental impact in different areas; basis for proper planning of green measures and areas; by comparing the data over a time series, the development of the key performance indicators can be better assessed and appropriate measures can be taken; it helps to set priorities – they can define concrete reduction goals; or tools help you to invite people, include them and build strong enough leverage to tackle the challenges.

In a nutshell, tools and data are sometimes required to initiate funding and are essential for goal setting ('plan'), implementation ('do'), monitoring ('check'), and improvement based on evaluation ('act').

2.2. Mapping and classification of tools and data

There has been good progress made in the development of tools applicable for greening the CCS across the EU. While certain tools and data have been designed specifically for the CCS, others originate from different sectors but provide value in this context. For the calculation of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, all operators – not only in the CCS – rely on national emission factors. These form the basis of every national greenhouse gas accounting.

Many examples of tools can be found in the literature, including previous OMC reports, and further examples are cited in the survey conducted for this OMC group. Recognising the importance of accessibility, stakeholders within the CCS have started to collate these tools and datasets, making them available to potential users through their websites. These collections provide a structured overview and, in some cases, even a qualitative assessment, showcasing tools from around the globe.

One notable example is Culturzaam ([26]) in Belgium, an initiative by the Flemish government and the organisation 'Pulse – Cultural Network for Transition'. This online toolkit serves the sustainable culture, youth and media sectors, featuring more than

60 tools in the fields of catering, carbon calculation, sustainable governance, energy, finances, buildings, mobility, production and water.

Another example is Switzerland's Tatenbank ([27]), an online action platform for the culture and events sectors that offers tools as well as articles on good practices and detailed insights on topics such as energy, catering, infrastructure, materials, mobility, communication, fairness, inclusion, diversity and awareness. Tatenbank is managed by 'Vert le futur' and funded by several public funding bodies.

There is already a diverse range of types of tools and data, although some types are prevalent.

Guidelines and fact sheets

Guidelines for environmental and climate protection measures provide users with step-by-step guidance in their planning and implementation. They often include spreadsheets that help maintain a clear overview.

Examples:

- Theatre Green Book ([28])
- French Ministry of Culture framework for action and cooperation for ecological transformation – an action framework for all structures in the artistic creation sector ([29])

Studies

Various types of studies on greening data in the CCS can be identified. These include case studies about the carbon emissions of single artistic events or cultural institutions, along with studies analysing (sub)sectors over certain time frames and regions.

Examples:

- Study on paper purchases by book publishers in France – the French Publishers Association conducts this study biennially to monitor the impacts of (policy) measures taken ([30])
- National Centre of Cinema in France (CNC) – the CNC's ecological transition observatory collects data from mandatory carbon audits and carries out studies that are made available to professionals ([31])

Calculators

Calculators of various types are widely recognised as essential tools providing data for informed decision-making. Among these, carbon calculators constitute by far the largest category of all greening calculators. There are many carbon calculators for products and operations and specific applications for the CCS.

Examples:

- Creative Climate Tools ([32])
- SEEDS ([33]) – a carbon calculator designed for the live performance sector in France
- GoGreen project ([34]) – developing a web application to support green heritage conservation decisions
- CO2-standard for culture ([35]) – a carbon accounting standard and tool for cultural institutions in Germany

Figure 7: Perceived effectiveness of carbon calculators as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

Do you consider CO2 calculators to be effective in guiding actions to reduce carbon footprint?

30	83	33	21
Very effective	Effective	Not familiar with them	Not effective

Carbon footprint benchmarks

Cultural and creative subsectors (e.g. dance venues, the recorded-music industry, museums) adopt a benchmark approach to measure their footprint and define sectoral decarbonisation strategies, along with using simple and free-of-charge sectoral carbon footprint calculators to track improvements.

The benchmark approach avoids the cost and time of each individual entity measuring their impact. At the same time, ownership of the process incentivises a discussion around comprehensive sectoral solutions (e.g. greener, shared paths in the production and distribution of the arts).

Example:

• The REC (Reduce our carbon footprint) study, under the aegis of the French National Centre of Music, offering the first picture of recorded music's carbon footprint and highlights in particular the major impact of digital devices and digital platforms

Artificial intelligence tools

There are already several tools and solutions that use artificial intelligence for greening purposes and that can benefit the CCS. Artificial intelligence is particularly applied in areas such as process optimisation (e.g. energy, heating, cooling, waste management) and smart inspections.

However, it is important to note that the use of artificial intelligence in this context also faces some challenges, including ecological concerns linked to data centres. This concerns issues related to legal compliance, freshwater use, materials consumption (e.g. rare earth, lithium), energy consumption, electronic waste generation and air pollution.

Example:

• Bin-e – a smart waste bin, based on artificial intelligence [36]

Certifications

Certifications define standards that need to be met and provide practical guidance for greening.

Examples:

• Austrian Ecolabel [37]
• Eco-management and audit scheme, the European environmental management system for businesses worldwide [38]
• SHIFT Eco-Guidelines for Networks – SHIFT Culture [39]

Miscellaneous

Some other web-based and open-source tools are currently utilised in the CCS.

Example:

• CooProg – an online platform in the field of performing arts to share project ideas and coordinate programming beyond national borders [40]

2.3. Local to global: aligning the geographical scope of tools and data

The tools supporting the greening of the CCS exist across a range of scales, from the local or organisational to the European and global levels. The majority (76 %) of the cultural and environmental stakeholders consulted in the dedicated survey, representing both small and large institutions, declared that a national or European scope is preferable for these tools to be developed and this data to be gathered. The existence of tools designed for a wider scope allows competent authorities and other users to gather standardised data, to set common standards and to enable cross-comparison for sectoral operators. Some examples of global or pan-European level tools are the following.

• United Nations Climate Neutral Now [41], an initiative to achieve a climate-neutral world by 2050, as enshrined in the Paris Agreement.

• Green Events Tool [42], an integrated web-based assessment platform conceived and designed to evaluate the sustainability and environmental performance of events, developed, hosted and maintained by the UN Environment Programme, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat and the Gulf Organisation for Research & Development. This tool takes a general approach and is therefore applicable worldwide, while tools for green event certification in Germany and Austria offer examples of practical criteria that are directly applicable at the national and local levels.

• Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) [43], a green building rating system, widely used at the global level.

• The European Commission has supported the development of the media carbon calculator [44]. This tool, financed by Creative Europe, offers a standardised method for EU producers to assess the carbon footprint of their audiovisual projects. It responds to a request from the audiovisual sector, accustomed to co-productions, for a harmonisation of tools. It will run from 2025 to 2027 and will provide comparable data.

Figure 8: Optimum level for green transition support as identified by survey respondents, in numer of mentions.

59
Pan-EU

29
Regional/local

11
Organisationals

69
National

What is the optimum level at which to develop tools to support the CCS in the green transition?
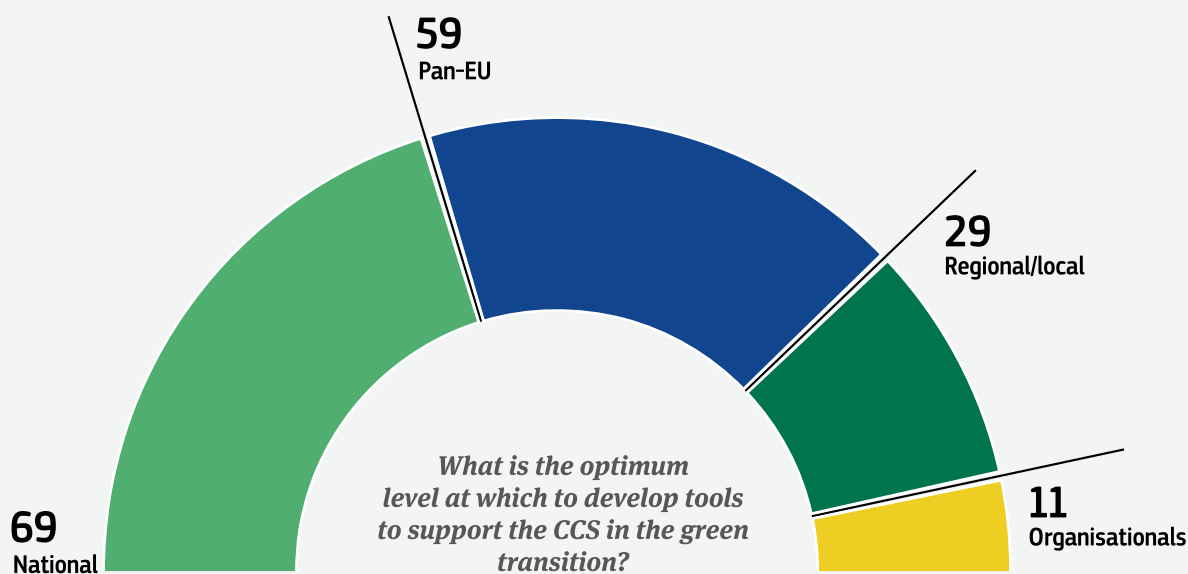
Cross-sectoral cooperation is key to making the most of the tools and to advancing the greening of the CCS. For this reason, it is important to take differences among European regions into account. To this end, collaboration with Eurostat and the European Environment Agency should be considered, as these institutions collect and validate data from Member States (and collaborative countries).

It is also desirable to disseminate and share the tools already created at the local or national level, and where appropriate to make EU tools directly usable locally. In this regard, cooperation among Member States and with the Commission should aim to speed up the spread of simple, efficient, free-of-charge, versatile tools.

2.4. Effective use of tools and data in the green transition

In today's data-driven world, the mere availability of tools and data is not enough. It is easy to fall into the trap of collecting vast amounts of information without a clear understanding of its purpose. Data collection should be driven by clear goals and expected outcomes, rather than simply accumulating numbers, statistics or observations.

When it comes to the adoption of tools aimed at facilitating the green transition, the question arises: should their use be mandatory or optional? Both approaches have advantages and drawbacks, and the ideal choice can depend significantly on the specific circumstances of different Member States or organisations.

Mandatory tools

- Increased participation in the sector
- Consistent and standard protocols
- Lack of flexibility for local conditions
- Possible resistance by operators

Voluntary tools

- Improved ownership by operators
- Room for experimentation and innovation
- Possible lower uptake in the sector
- Less comparable data and results

The key to the successful activation of the green transition lies in balancing mandatory and voluntary use, based on the context and goals. In countries with strong sustainability commitments and resources, mandatory tools can ensure all cultural operators contribute. In areas with less infrastructure, a voluntary approach allows flexibility and offers a pathway to a more controlled system. A hybrid model, where basic tools are mandatory and more advanced ones are optional, can also work to ensure essential goals are met while allowing room for innovation.

Reliability is a critical factor when implementing these tools. If the data or guidance provided by a tool is inaccurate, incomplete or biased, it can lead to misguided decisions, undermining the goals of the initiative. To address this issue, the development of a verification system would help ensure that the tools being used are based on reliable, accurate and up-to-date sources. This could be achieved through independent audits, peer reviews or certification from recognised experts or governing bodies. As an example, in the case of a mandatory carbon footprint in audiovisual production, the CNC in France makes its subsidies conditional on the use of calculators that are developed by other suppliers but approved by the CNC.

Measuring should never be for measuring's sake. It is a great opportunity for team training and a getting a better picture – which means it also comes as a burden for an organisation. Indeed, as an example, measuring the carbon footprint of a cultural institution takes from 6 to 12 months, and its financial cost and impact on the team is far from insignificant – especially for the vast majority of small institutions.

The digitalisation of tools brings many efficiencies and savings. However, the growing trend of tools being created for online implementation is not without environmental burden as they require a lot of energy and resources, and so their digital footprint should be considered.

Another issue is the trade-off between accuracy and practicability. The more accurate a tool or data-gathering process is, the more complex and demanding (labour-intensive) it becomes. For operators in the CCS, there is already a lot of red tape and often a severe amount of understaffing. In these cases, practicability gets chosen over accuracy, since the latter demands more labour input, for which resources are often not available.

Lastly, when implementing any kind of tool, it is essential to consider the effort and time required to use these tools effectively. For any operator, the complexity of integrating these tools into day-to-day operations can have significant implications. Moreover, the scale of the organisation, whether it is a small local cultural initiative or a large, multinational institution, also plays a major role in determining the resources and capacity for successful implementation.

2.5. Key messages

Transparency is an important factor: by collecting data and reporting on it, other players can see the change happening in the sector. In addition, it can work as a motivation for peers to act in their own organisations or even in their personal lives.

While tools and data are crucial elements of the greening strategy, there are some risks to be considered when using sustainability support tools and introducing data gathering protocols. For example, there is a risk that the implementation of tools and monitoring becomes the main focus, and the organisation loses sight of the overall desired outcome. Also, the application of a tool without clear goals can give rise to the appearance of the 'greenwashing' of organisations and events. To avoid this circumstance from arising, **strategic objectives and performance indicators should be clearly defined and kept under review**.

Another pitfall for data-gathering is when **no action is linked to measurement**. Almost one third of policymakers consulted replied that data is not adequately used after its compilation. In order to act effectively on gathered data, there need to be **specific goals or benchmarks that relate current performance to a desired future state**.

Equally important is embedding existing tools within broader, cross-sectoral frameworks, allowing the CCS to **align their actions with wider environmental and policy landscapes**. Looking ahead, there is a clear need to establish a coordinated and well-defined role for the CCS, aligned with global environmental frameworks. This shared vision should provide strategic direction while fully respecting creative expression and artistic freedom, ensuring that sustainability goals do not come at the expense of core cultural values.

Finally, identifying the end users of tools and data is essential to ensuring their relevance and practical application. By tailoring resources to meet the actual needs of those using them, the sectors can build capacity more effectively and support meaningful progress.

These steps, taken together, will help integrate the CCS into the wider sustainability agenda while maintaining their unique role as drivers of cultural expression and societal change.

In summary, these ideas for future steps are considered fundamental.

- Articulate a clear, coordinated horizon for the CCS, aligned with global environmental frameworks (Paris Agreement, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).
- Establish a framework where goals and benchmarks can be formulated while fully respecting the creative expression and artistic freedom.
- Embed tools into wider, cross-sectoral perspectives to relate them to the bigger framework and horizon.
- Gather and use data for specific goals to formulate measures instead of gathering data for the sake of it.
- Identify the end users of tools and data to shape the tools specifically for them.

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3. TRANSFORM

SCALE UP GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE FIELD

This chapter presents how the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) can transform intentions into action by adopting and replicating effective sustainability practices. Through real examples, it demonstrates how institutions are improving energy efficiency, embracing circular models, promoting sustainable mobility and engaging communities in climate action. The chapter emphasises that while the CCS can lead systemic change through creativity and influence, replication faces challenges such as funding gaps, regulatory barriers and capacity limits – particularly for smaller players. The key messages highlight the need for practical tools, cross-sector collaboration and tailored support to scale up impact and integrate environmental responsibility into the core of cultural practice.

This chapter explores how operators across the CCS can move from intention to implementation by adopting effective practices that reduce environmental impact and presents actionable strategies, supported by survey findings, that reduce environmental impact and support broader sustainability goals. It identifies three key focus areas: energy and climate adaptation; resource circularity; and biodiversity and pollution. These provide a framework for meaningful environmental action across the sectors. Concrete examples from Europe show how CCS operators are implementing effective, scalable solutions – from energy-efficient upgrades to circular material use and biodiversity-sensitive programming. Policy support, local legislation and innovative strategies are essential enablers of this transition. The chapter ends with strategic recommendations to help mainstream effective green practices.

3.1. Transforming

As the CCS take on a greater role in the green transition, there is a growing need for clear, actionable strategies. This chapter focuses on the theme of 'transforming': the need for real, operational change to accelerate the green transition in the CCS. It highlights the crucial role the CCS play in shaping societal values and behaviours, positioning the sectors as a powerful force for environmental awareness. By integrating sustainable practices into artistic production and audience engagement, the CCS can promote more eco-conscious mindsets; by embedding sustainability into operations, artistic production and audience engagement, the CCS can lead by example and drive systemic change.

DE SINGEL, Antwerp, Belgium

In terms of mobility, DE SINGEL promotes sustainable transport for journeys to and from the site, for visitors, artists and staff. Cyclists are provided with enhanced parking, and a digital display of public transport departure times encourages its use. Journeys that are intrinsic to artistic and production operations are critically examined with the aim of using only CO_2-neutral transport for trips for artistic purposes that are less than 800 km. To enhance site biodiversity, there is an ecological green-space management plan, which includes less mowing, the creation of water features and a programme of de-paving (with trees replacing parking spaces).

The approach taken by DE SINGEL demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability. Based on concerns about climate change, the organisation carries out measures around the site and in daily operations that are highly transferable to other cultural institutions.

https://desingel.be/en/info/organisation

Figure 9: Importance of measures to stimulate the green transition as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

Rate the importance of the following measures in accelerating the green transition within the CCS

- ■ Very important
- ■ Important
- ■ Not important

Enhancing energy efficiency in building and operations
133
36
1

Implementing renewable energy solutions
120
48
2

Encouraging the use of eco-friendly materials
109
59
2

Organising outreach/engagement projects on the green transition
100
64
6

Promoting sustainable transportation options
98
65
7

Regulation to restrict availability of less sustainable options
54
87
29

Introduction of taxes/charges on less sustainable options
29
83
58
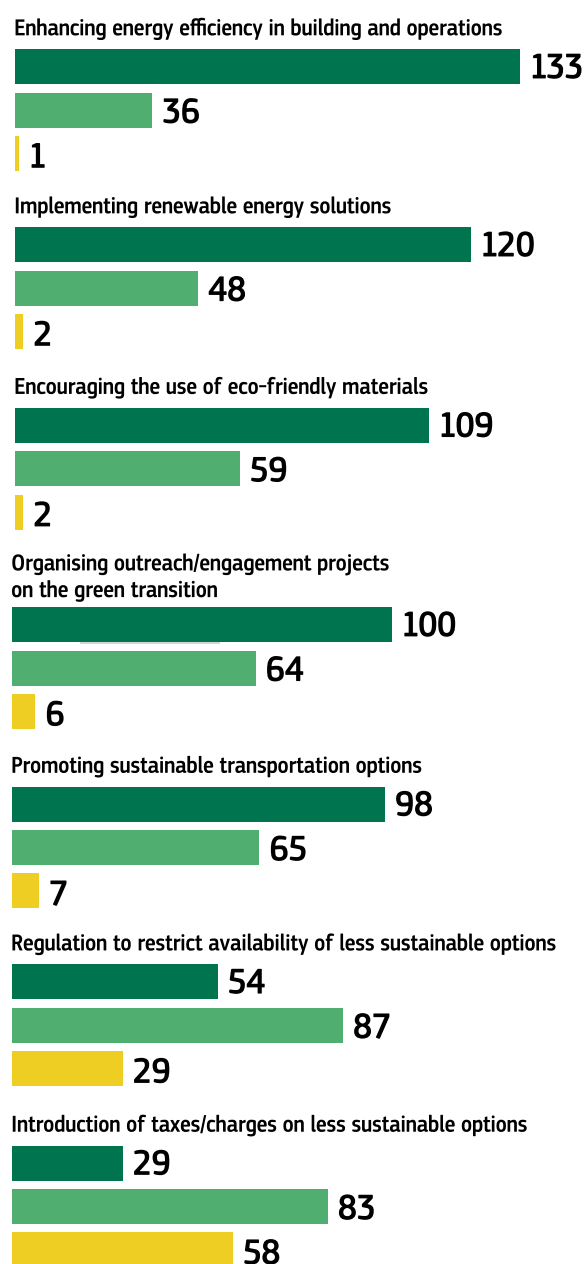
Figure 10: Most important environmental issues for the CCS as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

Improving energy efficiency **130**
Adopting circular economy principles **100**
Increasing recycling —**84**
Climate adaptation measures —**78**
Pollution prevention measures —**61**
Biodiversity improvements —**19**

Which are the most important environmental issues for the CCS?
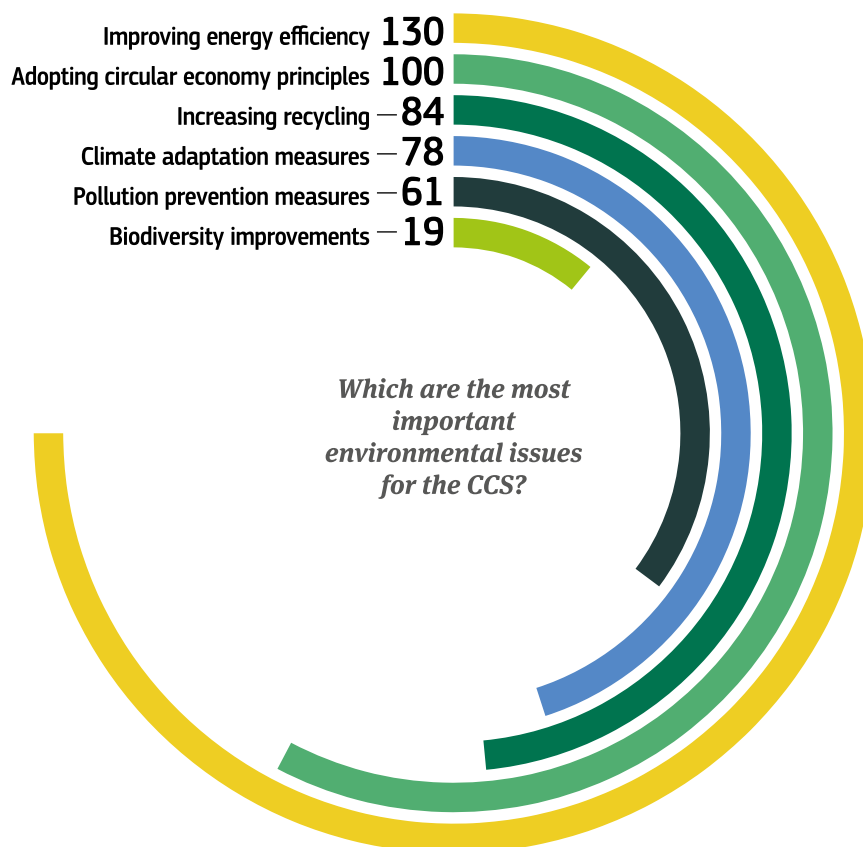
3.2. Energy conservation and climate adaptation and resilience

Cultural institutions are often housed in older, energy-intensive buildings with complex climate control needs, especially for the preservation of collections ([45]). These buildings contribute significantly to energy consumption and carbon emissions and can be highly vulnerable to climate-related risks. This section explores how operators can reduce their environmental footprint and build resilience through energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate adaptation strategies.

A major challenge is that many cultural organisations do not own their premises, limiting their ability to invest in long-term sustainability upgrades. Addressing this requires coordinated attention from policymakers, funders and property owners to secure the long-term use of spaces and infrastructure.

Several effective strategies exist to improve energy efficiency and adopt renewable energy. These are among the most effective ways operators can reduce their environmental impact, lower carbon emissions and generate cost savings over time.

As climate change accelerates, cultural institutions face the growing likelihood of damage to infrastructure, equipment and collections, and the disruption of day-to-day operations. Operators can strengthen resilience through adaptation measures – ranging from building upgrades to the proactive management of water and green spaces. Often, these strategies will not only safeguard cultural heritage but also enhance environmental performance.

Figure 11: Actions developed by CCS organisations contributing to greening operations, in number of mentions.

Increased awareness of environmental issues **147**
Reduced energy consumption **113**
Mainstreaming of sustainable practices in organising cultural activities **103**
Reduced waste generation **100**
Improved public engagement in greening processes **84**
Less impact on biodiversity / restoration of biodiversity **27**

How have your actions contributed to greening your operation?

3.2.1. Thermal modernisation

Upgrading the thermal performance of cultural buildings, through insulation, double- or triple-glazing and modern heating systems like heat pumps can significantly reduce energy use and emissions while enhancing comfort levels for users.

Lithuanian Sea Museum, Lithuania

As a part of broader sustainability strategy, the Lithuanian Sea Museum implemented thermal modernisation measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact. These efforts were combined with renewable energy production and green procurement practices.

This initiative stands out as a model due to its holistic approach to thermal modernisation within a cultural heritage context. It has resulted in substantial energy savings and lower operational costs. The museum's strategy offers a replicable framework for other cultural institutions to enhance their energy performance and environmental responsibility.

https://muziejus.lt/en

3.2.2. LED lighting

Replacing traditional lighting with LED (light-emitting diode) lights significantly reduces energy use. LEDs are more efficient and last longer than incandescent or fluorescent bulbs, leading to lower electricity costs and reduced maintenance requirements.

Offenes Kulturhaus Green Events, Austria

Since 2013, Offenes Kulturhaus (OKH) in Vöcklabruck has hosted events based on green principles. A Climate Alliance member since 2018, its OKH Open-Air was named one of Austria's most sustainable cultural events in 2022. With NextGenerationEU funding, OKH upgraded its building with LED lighting, solar panels, digital heating controls and green electricity.

OKH's approach combines simple, effective upgrades into a coherent sustainability strategy. It benefits both the organisation and its audiences while modelling environmentally responsible behaviour.

https://okh.or.at/greenevent

3.2.3. Solar panels

Installing solar panels generates clean, on-site energy by converting sunlight into electricity, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering energy costs. Installations may require careful siting on architecturally sensitive buildings. But many CCS institutions have already successfully adopted this solution, demonstrating its feasibility and long-term benefits.

Teatro Real, Spain

In 2025, Teatro Real installed 2 198 solar panels across 4 000 m² , generating energy saving of 963 159 kWh annually – avoiding 263 tonnes of CO_2 emissions. Part of a broader energy optimisation programme launched in 2020, the project also included LED lighting, smart air conditioning, energy monitoring and certified green electricity.

Teatro Real is the first cultural heritage site in Spain listed in the national Energy Savings Certificate Registry. Its comprehensive, transparent approach shows how large-scale green upgrades can be implemented in historic buildings. The model is highly transferable, especially for institutions with significant roof space.

https://www.teatroreal.es/es/noticia/teatro-real-inaugura-su-cubierta-solar

3.2.4. Energy monitoring systems

Digital energy monitoring systems are essential for identifying inefficiencies and optimising energy use. These systems deliver real-time consumption data that enables informed decisions on building management to reduce energy waste, such as adjusting internal temperature or refining lighting schedules.

Ogre Central Library, Latvia

Shortlisted by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions in 2022 as one of the world's top four new public libraries, Ogre Central Library exemplifies sustainable design. Key features include a digital energy monitoring system, CO_2 sensors and smart lighting that respond to occupancy and daylight, and solar panels. In addition, a rainwater-irrigated green wall was established that enhances air quality and provides natural cooling.

Ogre Central Library exemplifies how smart monitoring and automation can significantly boost energy efficiency in public buildings. Its integrated system offers a replicable model for CCS institutions aiming to reduce emissions and operational costs.

www.ocb.lv

3.2.5. Climate adaptation

Adapting to climate change is vital to protect infrastructure and the communities that depend on it. For the CCS, resilience means upgrading buildings, safeguarding collections and equipment, and ensuring the safety and comfort of artists, audiences and staff so institutions can continue preserving heritage and serving the public.

Sectoral climate adaptation plans, Ireland

Ireland's national framework for climate action includes sector-specific plans to address climate risks. One such plan is focused on historic buildings and archaeological sites, aiming to integrate adaptation into conservation planning; strengthen disaster-risk management for heritage sites; and plan for heritage value retention when loss is unavoidable. Progress is tracked through selected indicators to support continuous improvement.

With Europe's cultural heritage increasingly at risk, Member State governments need to provide leadership on adaptation. This structured, sectoral approach offers a model for the effective protection of cultural heritage from future climate impacts.

https://www.climateireland.ie/adaptation/adaptation-guidance-and-plans/sectoral-adaptation-plans/
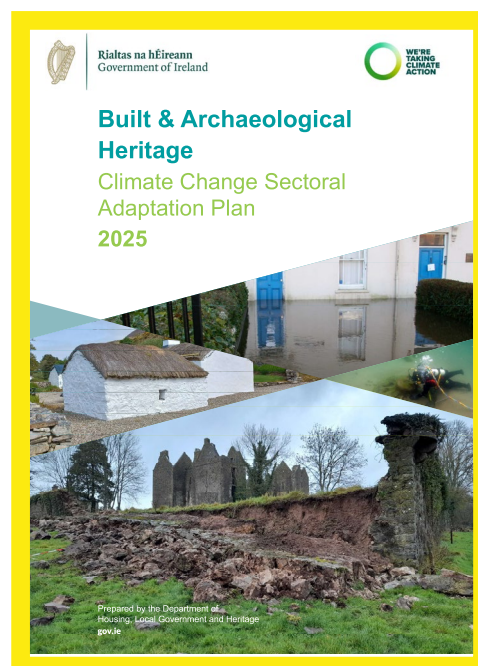
3.2.6. Green roofs

Roofs that are partially or completely covered with vegetation can support biodiversity, manage rainwater and reduce urban heat. Establishing green rooftops can improve air quality, improve flood resilience and create habitats for urban wildlife. This action can transform cultural heritage sites into environmentally responsible landmarks.

Valletta Design Cluster, Malta

The Valletta Design Cluster integrates sustainability into a restored heritage building through innovative features, including a green roof with native plants for insulation and biodiversity; rainwater harvesting via restored cisterns for irrigation; and a retractable glass canopy with photovoltaic cells for natural light and renewable energy.

These elements reduce energy use and promote ecological balance in an urban context. Through these measures, the Valletta Design Cluster exemplifies how heritage buildings can meet modern environmental standards, blending green infrastructure with cultural and community functions.

https://www.vca.gov.mt/en/valletta-design-cluster/our-facilities/

3.2.7. Certifications and standards

Pursuing certifications like ISO 14001 demonstrates a commitment to environmental management. These certifications provide a framework for setting and achieving sustainability goals, ensuring continuous improvement. By adhering to recognised standards, CCS operators can enhance their credibility and showcase their dedication to sustainability. This not only benefits the environment but also strengthens the organisation's reputation and appeal to environmentally conscious audiences.

Culture for Climate Scotland, Scotland

Culture for Climate Scotland is a national programme supporting cultural organisations in reducing their environmental impact through structured assistance and guidance. It provides certification tools such as environmental reporting templates, a sustainability evaluation framework, a Green Arts Charter outlining sector-wide commitments, and practical toolkits for implementation. These resources help organisations measure, monitor and improve their sustainability performance, fostering greener CCS across Scotland.

Pursuing certifications like ISO 14001 reflects a strong commitment to environmental management. By following recognised standards, CCS operators not only improve their sustainability practices but also enhance their credibility and appeal to environmentally conscious audiences. This approach benefits both the environment and the organisation's public image.

https://cultureforclimate.scot/

3.3. Resource efficiency and circularity

CCS operators can reduce material consumption and waste by adopting circular economy principles. From sustainable procurement and digital solutions to reuse and recycling, these practices help embed sustainability into the full lifecycle of cultural production. The following examples demonstrate how circular thinking can be applied across different CCS contexts, offering scalable models for reducing environmental impact.

Events, exhibitions and performances are a core component of the CCS's activities and managing them sustainably can have a substantial impact. CCS operators can significantly reduce their environmental footprint by adopting effective green strategies across their operations and production processes.

3.3.1. Water conservation

Water-saving measures like low-flow fixtures and rainwater harvesting are essential for sustainable infrastructure. These systems reduce water use, lower utility costs and ease pressure on municipal supplies.
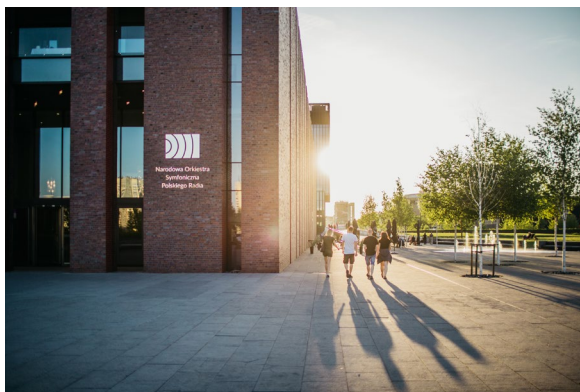
Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Poland

The Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra has introduced water-saving measures by installing faucet filters and water dispensers, reducing reliance on bottled water. These measures are part of a broader sustainability strategy that includes energy-efficient lighting, carbon footprint monitoring and environmental education.

This example shows how simple, low-cost water conservation efforts can be effectively integrated into a wider sustainability framework. It is easily replicable and supports both environmental goals and public engagement.

https://nospr.org.pl/

3.3.2. Waste reduction in cultural production

Reducing waste in the CCS involves recycling materials, using biodegradable alternatives and minimising single-use plastics. Reusing stage sets and costumes not only cuts waste but also lowers production costs. Biodegradable props ensure minimal environmental impact, while replacing single-use plastics with compostable or reusable options helps reduce pollution.

Collectif 17h25, France

Collectif 17h25, a collaboration between five major French opera houses including the Opéra national de Paris, reduces the environmental impact of opera productions by standardising scenographic structures. Through modular, reusable set components, the initiative cuts down on material waste, transport emissions and production costs, supporting circular economy principles in large-scale cultural institutions.

This initiative exemplifies how collaboration and standardisation can drive significant waste reduction in the performing arts. It provides a scalable model for sustainable production design, aligning with EU goals for circularity and climate action within the CCS.

https://www.collectif17h25.org/acceuil-1

3.3.3. Green procurement

Green procurement is a key strategy for reducing environmental impact. This includes using recycled paper, sourcing sustainable merchandise and working with eco-conscious suppliers. By adopting green purchasing policies, CCS operators can lower their carbon footprint and help drive demand for more sustainable products.

The Berlinale, Germany

The Berlinale's use of upcycled and recycled materials in merchandising reflects its known sustainability efforts. The festival has committed to reducing waste by producing items from recycled and vegan materials and repurposing previous festival materials into new products. This supports environmental goals, fair labour and climate-friendly logistics.

The Berlinale exemplifies how a high-profile cultural event can integrate sustainability into its core operations. By prioritising circular design in its merchandising, through the use of recycled, vegan and repurposed materials, the festival demonstrates leadership in reducing environmental impact while promoting ethical production standards. Its approach offers a scalable model for other festivals aiming to align cultural expression with climate-conscious practices.

https://www.berlinale.de/en/festival/sustainability.html

Minimum environmental criteria, Italy

As part of Italy's recovery and resilience plan under NextGenerationEU, the Italian government adopted, in October 2022, the minimum environmental criteria for cultural events and festivals. These criteria, developed with input from the EU-funded LIFE GreenFEST project, aim to reduce the environmental impact of publicly funded events by introducing sustainable procurement standards. The minimum environmental criteria cover areas such as energy efficiency, circular material use, low-impact mobility, sustainable catering and biodiversity protection, while also promoting social inclusion and accessibility. This reform represents a pioneering example of green public procurement tailored specifically for the cultural sector. The Sustainable Cultural Events Observatory (OESC) was created to support the implementation

https://www.mase.gov.it/portale/web/guest/-/riforma-3.1-adozione-di-criteri-ambientali-minimi-per-eventi-culturali

3.3.4. Digital solutions

Reducing paper use through digital solutions, such as online ticketing, digital signage and electronic communication, helps cut waste and streamline operations. QR codes offer easy access to programmes, schedules and other information, replacing printed materials while keeping audiences informed. This shift not only conserves resources but also reflects the broader move towards digitalisation across sectors.

National Theatre of Northern Greece, Greece

The National Theatre of Northern Greece has embraced digital solutions to lower its environmental impact. By replacing printed programmes with QR codes, shifting to digital advertising and offering low-cost e-books – including an interactive digital book of ancient Greek drama – the theatre significantly reduces paper use. The theatre also recycles banners and reuses promotional materials. Future plans involve introducing digital screens to fully replace printed content, aligning with broader sustainability and digitalisation goals.

This example illustrates how digital innovation can support sustainability in the performing arts. By reducing printed materials and embracing digital tools, the theatre conserves resources, enhances accessibility and boosts audience engagement, offering a replicable model for other institutions.

https://www.ntng.gr/

3.3.5. Vegetarian and vegan catering

Offering vegetarian options is a powerful way to reduce the carbon footprint associated with meat consumption. Meat production is resource-intensive and generates high levels of greenhouse gases. By providing vegetarian and vegan meals, CCS operators can lower the environmental impact of their events. Additionally, vegetarian and vegan catering can be complemented by locally sourced, organic ingredients to further enhance sustainability. This approach not only supports local farmers but also reduces transportation emissions.

Pro Progressione, Hungary

Pro Progressione has adopted a food policy that prioritises sustainability and inclusivity. Vegetarian or vegan meals made with locally sourced ingredients are the default at its events. Traditional meat dishes may be included in culturally significant contexts, but non-vegetarian meals are not covered by the organisation. To reduce food waste, participants are encouraged to bring containers, and leftovers are donated to local initiatives.

This is a strong example of how a clear, values-based food policy can support environmental goals while respecting cultural diversity. It demonstrates how CCS organisations can reduce emissions, support local economies and minimise waste through thoughtful catering practices.

https://proprogressione.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/green-guide.pdf

3.3.6. Local sourcing

Sourcing food and materials locally is an effective strategy to minimise transportation emissions. By choosing local suppliers, CCS operators can reduce the distance that goods need to travel, thereby cutting down on fuel consumption and associated emissions. Local sourcing also supports the local economy and fosters community relationships. For example, using local artisans for event merchandise or decorations can add a unique touch to events while promoting sustainability.

Samarbetet, Sweden

Samarbetet.org is a Swedish platform that connects cultural and creative organisations to share resources, coordinate programming and support local economies. Through shared tools like a mobile wood workshop, festival kitchen and local food distribution, it reduces transportation emissions and fosters collaboration. Combining digital infrastructure with regular in-person meetings, it builds trust, encourages knowledge exchange and strengthens the regional cultural ecosystem.

Samarbetet shows how local sourcing can be part of a broader strategy of cultural collaboration and sustainability. Its federative model offers a replicable approach to reducing emissions and building resilient, community-rooted cultural networks, especially relevant for rural and regional areas.

www.samarbetet.org

3.3.7. Waste management

Implementing comprehensive waste management systems, including recycling and composting, is crucial for sustainable event management. CCS operators can set up designated recycling stations and compost bins at event venues to encourage proper waste disposal. Educating attendees about waste segregation and the benefits of recycling can further enhance participation. Additionally, reducing single-use items, such as plastic cups and plates, and opting for reusable or compostable alternatives can significantly reduce waste generation.

ELIA – the European League of Institutes of the Arts, the Netherlands

The SHIFT Eco-Guidelines for Networks, developed by ELIA and partners, provide a structured approach to sustainable event management. They promote waste reduction through reuse, recycling and the elimination of single-use plastics. The guidelines also stress the importance of on-site waste sorting, collaboration with recycling providers and clear communication and education for staff, artists and audiences.

This ELIA initiative provides a practical, adaptable framework for embedding sustainable waste practices into cultural events. It supports CCS players in reducing their environmental impact and fostering a culture of sustainability across the sector.

https://shift-culture.eu/

3.4. Pollution and biodiversity

Cultural institutions can play a key role in protecting ecosystems and reducing pollution through their operations and public engagement. This subchapter highlights strategies such as sustainable mobility, green event management and awareness-raising initiatives that contribute to biodiversity conservation and pollution reduction. The featured practices show how the CCS can lead by example and foster environmentally responsible behaviours in society.

Transportation is a major contributor to the carbon footprint of the CCS's activities. Reducing emissions from touring performances and the transport of artworks to audience travel and staff commuting, emissions from mobility requires a multifaceted and strategic approach.

Raising awareness and educating stakeholders about sustainability is essential for fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. By equipping staff, audiences and the broader community with knowledge and skills, CCS operators can drive meaningful change.

3.4.1. Public transport

Encouraging the use of public transport for staff, artists and visitors is a practical and impactful strategy. CCS operators can reduce the number of individual car journeys and associated emissions by providing clear information on public transport routes and schedules; offering discounted or free public transport passes for event attendees; and collaborating with local transport authorities to improve accessibility and convenience. These measures not only reduce emissions but also promote inclusive access to cultural events.

KFZ – Kultur- und Freizeitzentrum Marburg, Germany

Kultur- und Freizeitzentrum Marburg promotes sustainable travel by clearly communicating public transport options and offering combination tickets that include free access to the local transport network. They also disclose the greenhouse gas emissions linked to event-related travel, encouraging visitors to choose low-emission transport.

This initiative shows how integrating mobility planning into event organisation can reduce transport emissions. It offers a replicable model that combines practical incentives with awareness-raising to support low-carbon cultural participation.

www.kfz-marburg.de

3.4.2. Electric vehicles

Using electric vehicles for touring and other transportation needs is another effective measure. Electric vehicles produce zero tailpipe emissions, making them a cleaner alternative to traditional gasoline- or diesel-powered vehicles. CCS operators can invest in electric vans or buses for transporting equipment and personnel and encourage staff to use electric cars, public transport or bicycles for commuting. Additionally, installing charging stations at venues can support the transition to electric vehicles and make it easier for visitors to charge their cars.

Jakop Ahlbom Company, the Netherlands

In 2024, Jakop Ahlbom Company, in collaboration with the Pieter Smit Group, completed the Netherlands' first emission-free theatre tour using a fully electric truck. Theatres supported the initiative by providing charging infrastructure, with recharging scheduled during off-peak hours. The tour tested solutions for zero-emission zones and urban logistics, contributing to the company's goal of becoming climate-positive by 2028.

This initiative proves that emission-free touring is possible in the performing arts. It offers a replicable model for integrating electric vehicles into cultural logistics while addressing infrastructure and scheduling challenges, advancing sustainable mobility in the CCS.

https://www.pietersmit.com/post/first-emission-free-theater-tour-hits-the-road

3.4.3. Shared transport

Organising shared transport options is an effective strategy to reduce individual car use and associated emissions at cultural events. This includes initiatives such as carpooling, shuttle services and ride-sharing programmes. By coordinating shared transport, CCS operators can significantly lower traffic congestion and environmental impact. Incentives such as priority parking, reduced tickets or prize draws can further encourage participants to choose sustainable travel options.

Electric Castle Festival, Romania

In 2024, the Electric Castle Festival launched a car-sharing campaign, offering free parking for fully occupied vehicles and prize incentives. This initiative led to 6 000 fully occupied cars and 30 000 attendees, significantly reducing individual car usage and emissions. The festival also provided non-stop buses and special trains to further support sustainable travel.

This example shows how large-scale events can reduce transport emissions through creative incentives and integrated mobility planning. It offers a replicable model for climate-conscious audience travel and sustainable event management.

https://electriccastle.ro

3.4.4. Transporting artworks sustainably

Transporting artworks and exhibition materials often involves long distances and complex logistics, contributing significantly to emissions. CCS operators can reduce this impact through strategies such as consolidated shipping, low-emission freight, shared transport with other institutions and reusable, lightweight packing materials. Where sustainable transport is not feasible, carbon offsetting can help mitigate the impact. These practices maintain high standards of care for cultural assets while supporting climate goals, offering a replicable model for greener touring and international collaboration.

International Council of Museums (ICOM), Global

ICOM's Green Mobility of Collections initiative promotes the sustainable transport of artworks through consolidated shipping, shared transport logistics and reusable packing materials. The initiative encourages museums to collaborate on transport planning, reduce the number of shipments and adopt low-emission logistics solutions. It also emphasises the importance of carbon offsetting when sustainable transport is not feasible.

The ICOM initiative is a sector-wide effort to address one of the most carbon-intensive aspects of museum operations. It demonstrates how international collaboration, logistical innovation and policy alignment can significantly reduce emissions related to conservation and security. It also aligns with the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs).

https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-voices-sustainability-management-museums/

3.4.5. Habitat management

Habitat management in the CCS refers to the intentional design, maintenance and enhancement of natural or semi-natural environments within or around cultural institutions. This includes integrating green spaces, supporting biodiversity and using nature-based solutions in cultural infrastructure. From green roofs to pollinator gardens, these practices help mitigate climate impacts, improve environmental quality and foster a deeper connection between culture and nature. By managing habitats, cultural institutions not only reduce their ecological footprint but also model sustainable living and engage communities in environmental stewardship.

Het Nieuwe Instituut Rotterdam, the Netherlands

The Zoöp model reimagines institutions as multispecies communities, integrating non-human life into decision-making to promote ecological regeneration. The Nieuwe Instituut helped to set up the Zoönomic Institute, and then became the first Zoöp in 2022 after appointing a 'speaker for the living' to represent non-human interests in its operational sphere. By now 14 Zoöp have been established.

Zoöps enhance their socio-ecological health, through initiatives like rooftop bird habitats, soil-improvement, developing regenerative design methods, supporting the connection between grassroots garden en kitchen practices, developing ecological monitoring tools, aligning with broader goals of regeneration and conservation.

The Zoöp model offers an innovative, inclusive approach to regenerative practices, showing how cultural institutions and companies can lead in biodiversity and water conservation through ecologically integrated governance.

https://nieuweinstituut.nl/en/projects/zoop/zoop-model

3.4.6. Training programmes

Conducting regular training sessions for staff on sustainability practices is crucial. These programmes can cover a range of topics, from energy conservation and waste management to sustainable procurement and green event planning. By providing ongoing education, CCS operators ensure that their teams are well informed and motivated to implement sustainable practices in their daily work.

Fondazione Santagata per l'economia della cultura, Italy

The 'Green culture training programme' supports cultural and creative organisations in their ecological transition. Through workshops, toolkits and mentorship, it equips professionals with practical tools to embed sustainability into daily operations. The programme aligns with the UN SDGs and promotes knowledge exchange across the sector. The training addresses the needs identified by the National Observatory for Decarbonisation in the Cultural and Creative Sector ([46]).

This initiative shows how structured training and peer learning can empower cultural professionals to lead sustainability efforts. Its scalable, collaborative model demonstrates the power of education and awareness in driving systemic change.

https://www.fondazionesantagata.it/en/featured/green-culture-training-programme-to-support-the-ecological-transition/

3.4.7. Public engagement

Organising workshops and events to educate the public about environmental issues and sustainable practices is another key strategy. These events can include lectures, interactive exhibits and hands-on activities that engage audiences of all ages. By raising awareness and encouraging community participation, CCS operators can inspire individuals to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and support environmental initiatives.

Fundação de Serralves, Portugal

The Fundação de Serralves implemented an environmental management system and became the first Portuguese cultural foundation registered with the EU eco-management and audit scheme in 2013, after receiving NP EN ISO 14001 certification. The Fundação de Serralves includes an exhibition centre dedicated to contemporary art, the Manoel de Oliveira cinema house, and the 18-hectare Serralves park. The park is made up of gardens representing various epochs, along with forested areas, an urban farm and meadows with diverse genetic heritage. This includes domestic animals of indigenous breeds. The park also has a pond complex, a mudflat, a treetop walk, a vegetable garden and a pedagogical greenhouse.

The Fundação de Serralves stands out for its innovative use of cultural participation to drive climate awareness and action. Events such as Bioblitz, GreenFest or the Festival de Outono, conferences and workshops promote education and awareness of biodiversity, water management, the circular economy and the impact of climate change. The institution also fosters scientific literacy and citizenship, demonstrating how cultural initiatives can effectively engage the public in sustainability efforts and are a powerful ally for lasting behavioural change.

https://www.serralves.pt/

CCI4change, Latvia

The Interreg project CCI4change, led by the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture, empowers local communities to co-create cultural and creative responses to climate change. Through workshops, participatory events and citizen-driven initiatives, it promotes climate education, fosters dialogue and encourages sustainable practices. Its inclusive, hands-on approach strengthens community ownership and inspires long-term environmental action through creativity and engagement.

CCI4change stands out for its innovative use of cultural participation to drive climate awareness and action at the grassroots level. By focusing on community voices and creativity, it demonstrates how cultural initiatives can effectively engage the public in sustainability efforts and foster lasting behavioural change.

https://ndpculture.org/projects/cci4change/

Figure 12: Main barriers to the implementation of green initiatives across the CCS, as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

97
Insufficient staff numbers to execute measures

64
Motivation and competing priorities

59
Lack of knowledge and skills

132
Lack of financial resources / support

What barriers has your organisation faced in implementing green practices into its work?
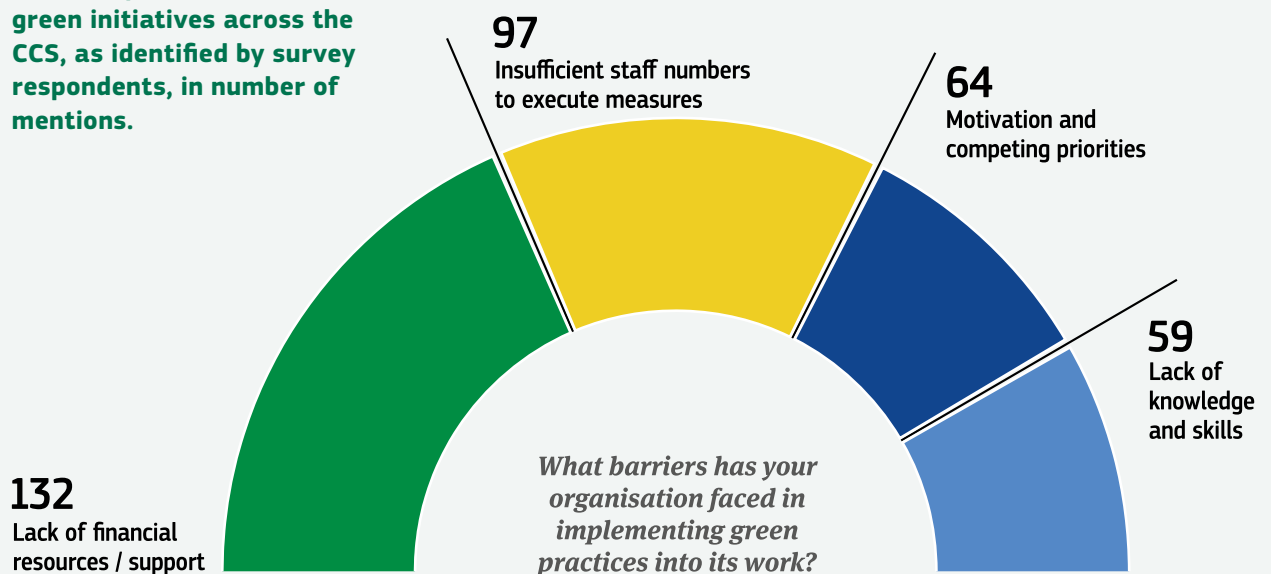
3.5. Replication challenges

Despite growing momentum, a range of persistent challenges continue to hinder the full integration of sustainability practices into the CCS. As shown in the diagram, the most common barriers include a lack of funding, limited staff or expertise and insufficient institutional support. Many respondents also highlighted the need for more training and internal commitment, particularly in smaller organisations.

Scaling up good practices in cultural institutions can face several key challenges. Many organisations, especially smaller ones, struggle with high upfront costs and limited funding, making investments in energy efficiency, water-saving technologies and eco-friendly procurement difficult. Heritage protection rules and building ownership issues often restrict renovations, especially in historic sites. There can also be a lack of technical knowledge and coordination between different stakeholders, which may complicate implementing complex solutions like climate adaptation or sustainable logistics. Regional differences in laws, infrastructure and climate conditions affect what is possible. Furthermore, traditional habits and supply chains can slow the adoption of greener options such as vegetarian catering or local sourcing. Education and certification efforts require ongoing resources and commitment

that may be hard for smaller institutions to maintain. Overall, without strong policy support, funding, leadership and tailored incentives, expanding these sustainability efforts widely can remain challenging in the CCS across all Member States.

3.6. Key messages

These examples from across Europe show that CCS institutions are already embedding sustainability into their operations, infrastructure, audience engagement and creative production. Their efforts have delivered measurable environmental benefits and cost savings, while also revealing structural and operational challenges that require collective solutions.

Mitigation measures such as energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy adoption, green roofs and water conservation are already delivering measurable environmental benefits and generating cost savings, proving that tangible progress is within reach.

Adaptation to the future effects of climate change is also an urgent issue, with a clear need to integrate resilience into long-term planning and present-day management to safeguard both cultural infrastructure and communities.

Circularity and digitalisation are proving to be scalable and cost-effective enablers across procurement, production and event management. **Mobility** represents a major challenge for emissions reduction, although touring, logistics and audience travel emissions can be significantly lowered through public transport, electric vehicles and shared mobility solutions.

Finally, **knowledge empowers transformation**. Training, public engagement and environmental certifications foster a culture of responsibility and strengthen credibility. Structured approaches such as ELIA's SHIFT Eco-Guidelines, supporting systematic implementation and peer learning, can accelerate progress towards more sustainable practices across the sector.

Smaller organisations will require additional tailored support to enable broader participation, including funding, practical tools and shared platforms.

Ultimately, systemic **collaboration** is essential, as no single player or organisation can drive this transition alone. Policy alignment, cross-sector partnerships and long-term investment are key to scaling up impact and fostering sustainable change.

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Endnotes

(45) Environment and Culture Partners, 'Culture over carbon: Understanding the impact of museums' energy use', accessed 2 September 2025, https://www.ecprs.org/capacity-building/culture-over-carbon.

(46) Fondazione Santagata per l'Economia della Cultura: National Observatory for Decarbonisation in the Cultural and Creative Sector, accessed 3 September 2025, https://www.fondazionesantagata.it/en/observatory-4c-cultural-and-creative-carbon-cut/.

4.
STIMULATE

ENABLE THE CCS THROUGH POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTION

This chapter explores how public policy can effectively stimulate and regulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) by mobilising stakeholders, providing targeted support and designing smart legislation. It outlines a threefold approach: building capacity within the sector; ensuring equitable financial and technical support (including through eco-conditionality); and creating light-touch regulatory frameworks tailored to the CCS's specific needs. Emphasising fairness, flexibility and shared responsibility, the chapter underscores the need to align policies across levels, scale up existing tools and embed sustainability into funding and training systems. With concrete examples from across the EU, it highlights how smart governance can enable cultural transformation while avoiding burdensome or inequitable outcomes.

4.1. Stimulating

Many of the changes described in Chapters 2 and 3 are grassroots efforts, developing the appropriate tools or implementing various good practices. These grassroots efforts provide inspiration for public policymakers and should be encouraged and supported.

This chapter addresses the design of policies to green the CCS and provides guiding principles for policymakers to support the green transition of culture. Stimulating the green transition for the CCS will be achieved through activating parallel measures across three key dimensions:

- the mobilisation of and capacity building within the CCS themselves;
- support (notably financial aid) both through general greening support and greening support targeted at the CCS; and
- legislation, which can be directed at both the CCS and the sectors that interact with them.

While legislative measures are undoubtedly powerful, they can present compliance challenges for organisations in terms of costs, technical capacity or required skills. It is therefore important that all three key dimensions – **regulation, support mechanisms and voluntary action** – are activated in parallel to facilitate effective greening. Legislation need not only impose obligations; it can also enable change by providing voluntary tools for the CCS to reduce their environmental impact – for example through the establishment of nature credit markets or incentive-based frameworks.

Equity: an overarching imperative

The first and most broadly shared challenge among policymakers tackling the greening of CCS is equity. In the analysis conducted for this OMC with both culture ministries and climate/environment ministries, the question of equity is a politically sensitive issue in addition to being a design challenge that can plague the efficiency of policy measures.

Indeed, the ecological crisis does not impact cultural operators, the various cultural and creative sectors, regions or Member States equally. A priority in the implementation of stronger greening policies should be to alleviate these ecological impacts for all, while avoiding creating further inequity.

At a macro level, the CCS should be asked to do no more but also no less than their fair share. However, this approach is potentially unfair and problematic at the micro level. For example, mobility is a major driver of carbon footprints. However, equality does not necessarily imply equity. A flat rate of reduction in emissions for all will hit an emerging artist or small venue harder than a larger institution as the larger institution will have more scope to absorb that impact. In the OMC survey, one policymaker remarked that it was 'important to warn against too much small-scale process control and to ask how a (sector-specific) balance can be struck between individual initiative and responsibility and productive framework conditions ensured by the state'.

There is certainly room for improvement on how equity is embedded into public policies. In this OMC survey of policymakers, more than two thirds of respondents from both culture and environment/climate ministries state they have no specific mechanisms to compensate for inequity (such as for variations in the scale of entities, geographical location or other particularities).

Figure 13: Share of policymakers declaring the institution they represent having or not having dedicated mechanisms to compensate for specific situations or possible inequalities among cultural players, in number of mentions.

Does your institution have any mechanisms to compensate specific realities or possible inequalities among cultural actors?

TOTAL   30 mentions

8
Yes

22
No/no answer

BY TYPE OF MINISTRY

Culture ministries:

19 mentions

6
Yes

11
No

2
No answer

Environment/Climate ministries:

11 mentions

2
Yes

4
No

5
No answer
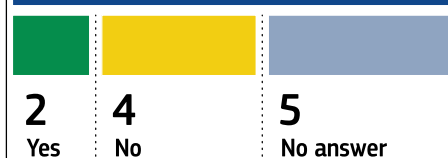
4.2. Mobilise CCS players and build up capacities and skills

4.2.1. Mobilise the CCS to take the first step

Outlined below are three simple principles that can help policymakers support the CCS in effecting change.

a. **Stand by the science.** Climate change, biodiversity loss and health-impacting pollution are real. Measuring the specific ways the CCS are linked to these crises provides an objective common ground for discussion and action (e.g. carbon footprints of the CCS, France; see below). This action can be strengthened by supporting further research linkages between cultural heritage and key issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss [47].

b. **Start small, within a larger plan.** Immediate action is preferable to waiting for the perfect tool or plan, and small first steps can and should lead to larger ones. Thus, policymakers should develop measures that allow operators to evolve and adapt their business models (e.g. sustainability ladder events in the Netherlands; see below). In this regard, a graded approach is proposed, with initial stages designed to prompt action and avoid inertia – i.e. focused on 'low-hanging fruit' opportunities.

c. **Engage and inform the sectors.** Public authorities have a role to play as clearinghouses for studies, measuring tools and data (see Chapter 2) and good practices (see Chapter 3). Showcasing action through conferences, sectoral communications and even competitions allow for the dissemination of proven practices.
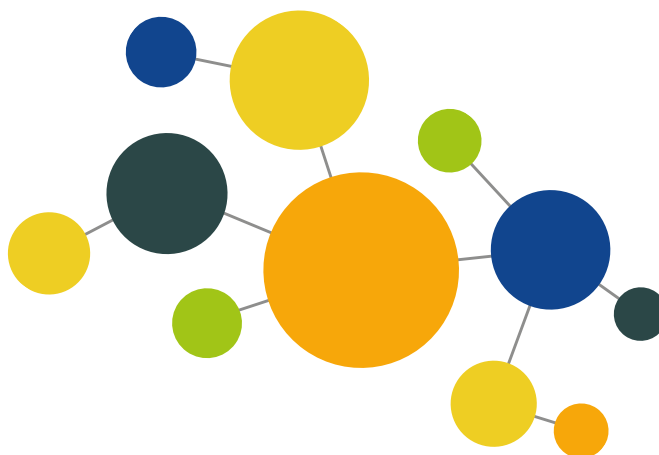
European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage (RCH)

The European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage proposed under Horizon Europe will bring together resources from the European Union and the participating Member states and Associated countries in bridging research and practice to preserve Europe's cultural heritage and to contribute to climate neutrality, while also promoting solutions stemming from cultural heritage research. Building on the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda developed by the Alliance for Research on Cultural Heritage in Europe (ARCHE), the Partnership will aim to foster interdisciplinary collaboration (heritage science, climate science, social sciences, green chemistry, engineering), build capacity, and produce policy-relevant solutions. It will also seek to integrate cultural heritage into climate and resilience strategies, at national and European levels, harnessing heritage-based knowledge and innovation. Among the objectives, this Partnership also emphasises the need to enhance social cohesion and the European sense of belonging through cultural heritage.

https://www.heritageresearch-hub.eu/european-partnership-for-resilient-cultural-heritage/

Sustainability ladder events, the Netherlands

With the number of sustainability criteria and tools ever growing, it is increasingly difficult for organisations to know where to get started. Therefore, in the Netherlands, the 'social enterprise' Green Events has developed the 'sustainability ladder events', in cooperation with partners from the sectors and the local and national government. This bottom-up approach makes it easy to get started and motivates event organisers to keep moving towards sustainability, always keeping the next – more sustainable – step on the ladder in mind.

The practice resulted in a 'motivating, integral growth model', addressing the need for the harmonisation of sustainability criteria for events. It includes a broad range of environmental, social and governance requirements and indicates which steps on the ladder these correspond to for a range of sustainability themes, such as energy use, waste and governance.

https://www.greenevents.nl/en/sustainability-ladder-events/

Carbon footprint benchmarks, France

Several cultural and creative subsectors have been funded by the French government to benchmark their carbon footprint and issue sectoral decarbonisation strategies, along with simple and free-of-charge sectoral carbon-footprint calculators. The government target is to have all CCS covered by 2027.

The benchmark approach avoids the cost and time of each individual operator measuring their impacts. At the same time, ownership of the process incentivises a discussion towards comprehensive sectoral solutions.

https://www.culture.gouv.fr/thematiques/transition-ecologique/Centre-de-ressources-Transition-ecologique-de-la-Culture/Outils-de-mesure-guides

Carbon footprint — state labels and operators
Kt CO$_2$ equivalent

Opéra Comique*	1
Jeu de Paume*	2
Odéon*	2
Street arts centers	2
Mobilier national*	3
Comédie Française*	5
Circus hubs	5
Palais de Tokyo	7
Choreographic centers	9
Orchestras	9
Visual arts center	16
Performing arts funds	16
Visual arts faculties	17
Philharmonie*	22
Performing arts centers	25
Visual arts faculties	30
Operas	30
Live music venues	33
Opéra National de Paris*	43
Multidisciplinary venues	48

Performing arts

Visual arts

Higher education

*State operator
Source: Ministère de la Culture

Data: Studies on state labels and state operators annual carbon footprint reporting. NB: State labels are public funded structures with a signed agreement on missions and duties.

Green Paper on the Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage, Spain

Dated 2023, the Ministry of Culture in Spain created a strategic framework promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability in heritage management. It offers theoretical and practical guidance for cultural managers and institutions, aligning national and international policies while encouraging citizen participation and impact evaluation. As the Ministry of Culture highlights, in cultural management, it is common to face challenges that must be addressed from the perspective of sustainability, and the Green Paper offers tools and tested practices to respond to those challenges.

https://www.cultura.gob.es/libro-verde-patrimonio/en/portada.html

4.2.2. Train the 'greeners' of the CCS

The share of people with skills relevant for the green transition employed in the CCS varies between 1 % (music, film and the performing and visual arts) and 14 % (architecture) [48].

Policymakers have a key role in defining the standards, the education credits and the training curricula for the CCS workforce [49]. Across Member States, several changes are happening and should be encouraged and compared for full effect.

- In line with the 'union of skills', which calls on 'promoting STEAM approaches, which integrate science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics by breaking down disciplinary barriers, fosters creative thinking', encourage cross-sectoral initiatives towards the green transition, linking it with the arts and CCS.

- Build on policy recommendations elaborated under Erasmus skills blueprint projects for cultural heritage (Charter) and cultural and creative sectors and industries (Cyanotypes, Saccord), the FLIP project and other relevant skills-related projects in the CCS.

- Encourage cooperation and learning via the 'Large-scale partnership for the cultural and creative industries ecosystem', along with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's 'Culture & Creativity' Knowledge and Innovation Community, in connection with the Climate Knowledge and Innovation Community and other relevant initiatives.

- Include skills on the green transition (e.g. knowledge about the ecological impact of the CCS, greening strategies, sustainability and change management) in the initial curriculum of arts and creative schools. The example of architects is a case in point – for example the 'green book' [50] issued by the ecological network of French national architecture schools.

- Support further professional training to provide resources to CCS professionals already in the field. The New European Bauhaus Academy [51] has been founded with the goals of broadening skills for sustainable construction, with many other sectoral or national/local examples.

- Align cultural policies with the emergence of new green jobs and professionals specific to the CCS, for example jobs that ensure the collaborative use of shared resources (such as venues) or cooperative organisations (the 'eco-touring' of artists and shows), along with consultants and experts for the tools detailed in Chapter 2.

- Support the expansion of existing sustainability education platforms into tangible CCS measures, such as the application of 'Sustainability in educational institutions'), in which Malta already participates.

- The delivery of training relating to funding requirements (as a form of conditionality – see 4.3.2.).

- Stimulate skills development in the field of the green transition to support existing networks from civil society. In Germany, the Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigkeit in Kultur und Medien (Sustainability in Culture and Media Action Network) [52] organises regular network events where the members can exchange good (and bad) practices. Furthermore, the network has established a certified training programme, Transformationsmanager:in Nachhaltige Kultur (Transformation Managers in Sustainable Culture) [53], which was successfully transferred to Austria in 2025.

- Set up a national platform combining training, data collection and the sharing of good practices in greening the CCS, such as Julie's Bicycle, an outstanding reference model ([54]).

- Contact points should be established at all political and administrative levels to help stimulate action, like the network of Green Contact Points at Creative Europe Desks, established in 2023 ([55]). The German Green Culture Contact Point represents a more recently established example at the national level (see text box in Chapter 5: Amplify).

4.3. Support and fund action

Financial support – and the relative lack thereof – is a major concern for CCS operators, as reflected in the OMC survey.

Two thirds of respondents surveyed for this OMC declared that the institution they represent finances the greening of culture with specific tools. While almost 80 % of cultural ministries stated that they provide such funding, only 36 % of environment/ climate ministries that responded stated they provide specific financing tools for the CCS. Therefore, there is an opportunity for these ministries to better support the CCS.

Figure 14: Major financial challenges in implementing green practices as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

Lack of available funding	113
High initial investment costs	80
Complexity of funding programmes	70
Balancing short-term costs with long-term benefits	64
Lack of access to or priority for cultural institutions in funding schemes	63
Ongoing operational expenses	56
Funding is only for short-term initiatives with temporary impact	51
Cost of training and development of staff	44
Return on investment concerns / savings not clear	33
Regulatory and compliance costs	21

What are the major financial challenges for implementing green practices?

Figure 15: Existence of specific tools for financing the greening of the CCS, by type of ministry, as identified by policymakers' survey respondents, in numer of mentions.

Does your institution finance the greening of culture with specific tools?

Culture ministries:

15 Yes	**2** No	**2** No answer

Environment/Climate ministries:

4 Yes	**5** No	**2** No answer
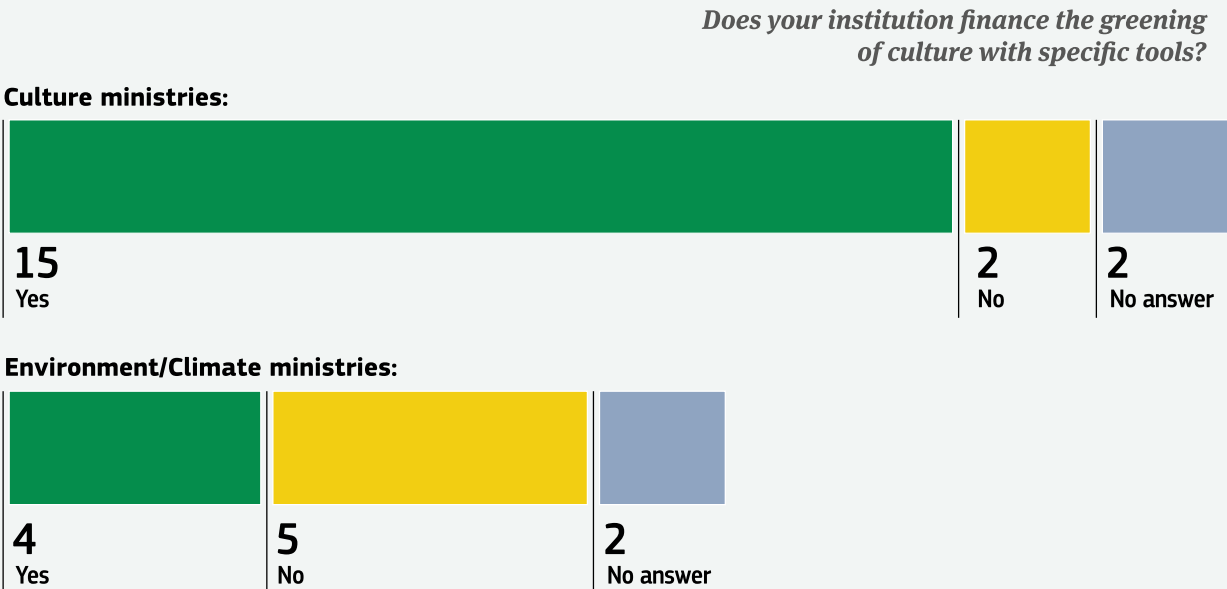
4.3.1. Assert the needs of the CCS in mainstream greening policy-tools at the EU, national and local levels

Several Member States have been using mainstream greening tools to support change in the CCS. In Member States where comprehensive funding schemes have been implemented ('green funds' or 'environmental funds'), they are often open to applications from the CCS. At a national or regional level, general instruments to fund the energy transition have also been utilised in the CCS.

EU instruments such as NextGenerationEU (including the European Recovery and Resilience Facility), cohesion funds and the Horizon Europe programme have been utilised to significant success. For example, Italy has allocated EUR 93 million from NextGeneration EU to retrofit 285 cinemas, 368 theatres and 130 museums to improve energy performance ([56]), and a comprehensive energy modernisation of selected facilities in the public art schools and the state archives in Poland has been made possible, inter alia, by EU funds ([57]).

One could state that when mainstream greening policy tools are made (more) accessible to the CCS, they can generate scalable and replicable models for sustainable transformation. However, CCS institutions still face barriers in accessing these funds due to a lack of tailored support or awareness. Ensuring fair access and dedicated pathways within broader green policies is essential for unleashing the sectors' full potential to contribute to the green transition.

Thus, the importance of providing the CCS, as both an engine of economic development and a public good, with its fair share of support cannot be overstated.

4.3.2. Gear cultural funding towards greening: eco-conditionality

A policy tool for transformation

Eco-conditionality – linking public funding to environmental compliance – has proven to be an effective mechanism for accelerating the green transition in various sectors of the European economy. It occupies a strategic middle ground between traditional regulatory approaches and voluntary incentive schemes: by making access to public support conditional on meeting sustainability criteria, it encourages widespread uptake without requiring universal legal mandates. While eco-conditionality has seen measurable success in sectors such as agriculture, construction and the automotive industries, its application within the CCS remains limited. This section outlines the rationale for extending eco-conditionality to the CCS and provides policy recommendations informed by successful cross-sectoral examples.

Success in other sectors highlights its effectiveness: under the common agricultural policy ([58]), European farmers must adhere to environmental standards to receive direct payments, fostering biodiversity and resource conservation. Similarly, the EU's green public procurement framework ([59]) requires contractors to meet sustainability criteria, promoting energy efficiency and low-carbon construction methods. Post-pandemic State aid and EU recovery funds ([60]) for the automotive industries were made conditional on investments in electric vehicle production, battery technology and emissions reduction, accelerating the transition towards sustainable mobility.

Benefits for the cultural and creative sectors

Integrating eco-conditionality into cultural funding offers numerous advantages. Linking cultural investments to the European Green Deal reinforces the sectors' role in combating climate change, while public funding aligned with sustainability goals prevents the inadvertent support of harmful practices. Clear environmental standards foster innovation and fairness, levelling the playing field for institutions adopting green practices. Transparency through monitoring and reporting builds public trust and enhances the cultural and creative sectors' contribution to environmental goals.

Strategic implementation

For eco-conditionality to be effective in the CCS, it must be tailored to sector-specific needs while maintaining clarity and ambition. Gradual, realistic environmental standards ensure inclusivity and steady progress, avoiding the exclusion of smaller institutions, while also avoiding discouraging frontrunners that already have (more) ambitious goals. Providing guidance and training, along with platforms for knowledge exchange and best practices, facilitates compliance. Harmonising criteria across national, regional and EU funding programmes simplifies processes and amplifies impact.

State of play in the EU on eco-conditionality for the CCS

To the question pertaining to incentives and conditions (e.g. green criteria) for aid, the culture ministries surveyed declared that the conditionality is 'linked to specific funding or incentives', through 'voluntary commitments from cultural actors' or 'optional but encouraged' as principal conditions for their incentives. Several Member States have started implementing eco-conditionality rules to cultural policies across various sectors, and these rules are of particular importance in funding for the audiovisual sector (examples outlined below).

Figure 16: Type of promoted eco-conditionality incentives as identified by policymakers' survey respondents, in number of mentions.

If you provide any incentives, what form do eco-conditionality incentives take?

Linked to specific funding or incentives	13
Optional but encouraged	11
Voluntary commitments from cultural actors	10
Part of a scoring system for evaluation	9
Specific to certain types of projects	8
Binding criteria	7
Mandatory for all projects	2
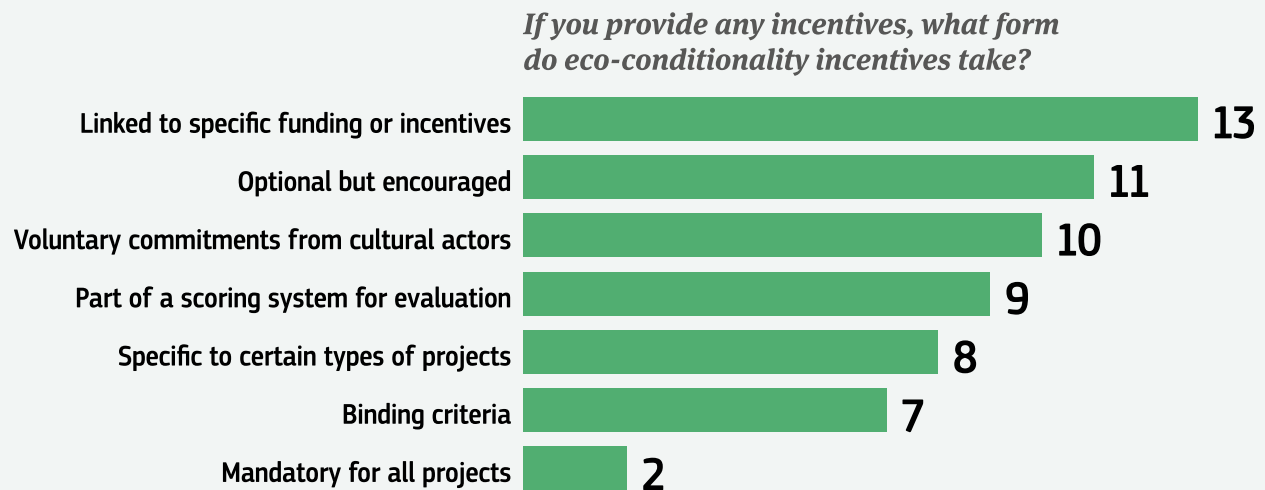
Austrian Ecolabel for cultural institutions, Austria

The Austrian Ecolabel is the general environmental certification scheme for sustainable products and services in Austria. Within its framework, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Environment together with the Federal Ministry for Arts and Culture developed practical criteria and an environmental standard for cultural institutions (museums, theatres and cinemas), along with the Austrian Ecolabel for film productions and the Austrian Ecolabel for green event locations. Compliance with sustainability criteria in accordance with the Ecolabel is mandatory in the area of film funding.

This mechanism offers clear directives for sustainable practices, ecological responsibility, conscious resource use and sociopolitical accountability in daily management and the planning of events or exhibitions. Furthermore, the initiative unlocks the potential of cooperation between sustainable institutions and companies of different sectors and types by exchanging knowledge and experience.

https://www.umweltzeichen.at/en/culture

Ecological standards for German cinema, TV and online/video-on-demand productions, Germany

Germany's Federal Climate Change Act sets national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and achieve climate neutrality by 2045, in line with the Paris Agreement. Though the audiovisual sector is not directly regulated under the Federal Climate Change Act, sustainability is addressed through the German Film Law and mandatory ecological standards for all publicly funded film, TV and online productions. The ecological standards are a basis for funding requirements in the framework of state and federal funding and are also met by many production companies, broadcasters and video-on-demand services on a voluntary basis. They are divided into five fields of action: general requirements; energy use; personnel and material transport; employment and use of materials; accommodation and catering. One of the standards' essential objectives is the reduction of CO_2 emissions in the various stages of film production. A recording of the planned CO_2 emissions must be carried out with a CO_2 calculator.

This initiative shows how national climate goals are aligned with cultural policy, making ecological sustainability a legal requirement for film funding. It offers a practical, structured model for integrating green practices into audiovisual production. This German initiative is also highlighted because of its collaborative approach between key stakeholders in the German audiovisual industry and because it has inspired similar initiatives, for example in the Nordic countries.

https://www.ffa.de/nachhaltigkeit.html
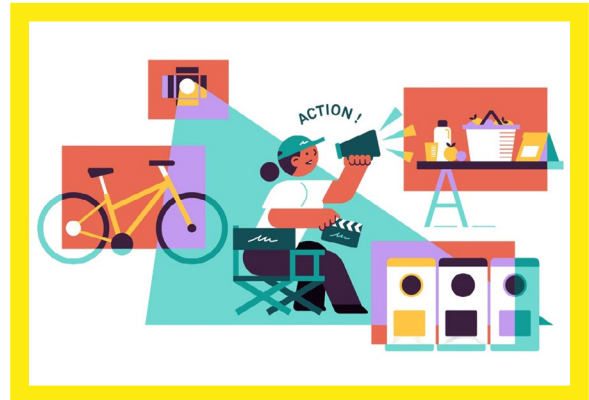
'Action!' plan for cinema and audiovisual production, France

The 'Action!' plan was launched in 2021. It is based on three pillars. Firstly, green training has been made available for all audiovisual professionals. The gathering of carbon-footprint data has become mandatory in production, ex ante and ex post, to benefit from CNC funding. Lastly, the sector has developed a standard (AFNOR SPEC) for sustainable live filming. Since 2025, a green bonus has funded audiovisual productions that respect the more demanding levels of that standard.

This initiative insists on sectoral cooperation and discussion, a step-by-step and comprehensive approach, and tests ways to implement eco-conditionality both as a basic requirement and as a bonus approach.

https://www.cnc.fr/a-propos-du-cnc/le–plan-action–-politique-de-transition-ecologique-et-energetique-des-secteurs-du-cinema-de-laudiovisuel-et-des-industries-techniques_1850685

Eco-conditionality offers a proven, adaptable tool for ensuring that public cultural funding contributes meaningfully to the EU's climate and environmental goals. It strikes a balance between ambition and feasibility, encourages innovation and can position the CCS as pivotal contributors to Europe's green transition.

Eco-conditionality in the cultural and creative sectors: a checklist

Design options

Targeting. Questions of efficiency and equity should guide the choice between a universal requirement and one targeted on certain CCS operators (based on size, geographical constraints, etc.). In the audiovisual and film sectors, where eco-conditionality is the most advanced amongst the CCS, the choice has generally been towards a universal requirement.

Positive or negative conditionality. Eco-conditionality can be designed as a bonus (additional or specific funding when criteria are met) or a penalty (less or no funding when they are not). So far, in the early stages of testing and implementation, the trend across the EU has been towards positive eco-conditionality.

Means-based or result-based conditionality. Eco-conditionality can refer to a means criterion (e.g. CCS operators have to measure their carbon footprint to benefit from funding, whether the footprint is big or small, better or worse, etc.) or result-based (e.g. CCS operators must prove their teams have complied with the training requirement).

Standard-based conditioning or specific goals. The current landscape of eco-conditionality for CCS funding in the EU points towards these two equally interesting models: one is standards-based and encompasses the entire activity (see the text boxes on the Austrian Ecolabel and German ecological standards in the audiovisual industry); the other targets one or a limited number of goals (providing a carbon footprint, implementing ecological training, etc.), as is the case for Creative Europe.

Implementation considerations

Define realistic, stepwise requirements. Sustainability standards should be informed by the sector's realities, regularly updated and designed to promote incremental progress without excluding smaller institutions. This approach helps avoid overly stringent requirements that could hinder participation.

Provide tools and support. To facilitate compliance, offer technical guidance, funding for green adaptation (such as energy-efficient lighting or sustainable touring logistics) and create platforms for knowledge exchange and the sharing of good practices across cultural institutions.

Ensure policy coherence. Align eco-conditionality criteria across national, regional and EU funding programmes to streamline implementation and reduce administrative complexity, thereby increasing the impact and accessibility of support.

4.4. Regulate and legislate – with a light touch

The introduction of mandatory legal requirements such as minimum standards and binding targets can be a powerful tool for motivating organisations to make changes. These restrictions can be directed at suppliers or purchasers of goods and services and act to prompt a change in market conditions, for example constraints on single-use plastics in event catering. If applied carefully, legal instruments create a level playing field across an entire sector and encourage all organisations to improve their environmental impact.

A careful approach should guide the customisation of broader greening tools (regulations, funds, etc.) according to the specific needs of the CCS. A case in point is the question of energy savings and targets, along with the production of renewable energies (solar, wind, etc.) or the preservation of biodiversity.

Consumption targets valid for any office block should probably be applied for an office block where CCS operators are at work. On the other hand:

- cultural venues, such as cinemas, archives and libraries, museums, etc., have strong building and energy-use specificities that should be weaved into the design of energy regulations (see Chapter 4);

- heritage sites, including listed buildings hosting cultural activities, are being treated differently for matters of energy savings and production; the example of the recent renovation of the Teatro Real (Madrid, Spain) proves that ingenuity, expertise and determination can achieve the fine balance between heritage protection and the green transition (see text box in Section 3.2.3.);

- special consideration should be given to heritage given the challenges of climate adaptation, as emphasised in the UNESCO policy document on climate action for world heritage [61].

4.5. Key messages

Eco-conditionality, which involves adding environmental standards as criteria for access to funding schemes, is emerging as a tool to encourage sustainable transformation. At the EU level, there is a growing need to harmonise eco-conditionality tools for cultural and creative activities, including tours, audiovisual productions, exhibitions and digital music platforms. Their careful planning is also critical, to avoid imposing unfair burdens on smaller cultural organisations that could act as a barrier to support. It is also vital to underpin eco-conditionality approaches with capacity-building programmes, to provide cultural and creative agents with the necessary knowledge and skills for managing the green transition.

Sharing existing tools is more cost effective and time efficient than developing new tools for measuring carbon footprints, nature footprints, lifecycle analyses, etc.

In parallel, cultural players working at the EU or global scale are increasingly asked to **comply with various national standards and to measure their impacts through different tools**. This trend could result in a new layer of administrative burden – when indeed the greening of the CCS should be encouraged and facilitated.

Another issue at hand is that of potentially **differing ecological standards for the CCS across the EU**, including for activities where demand and/or supply is more mobile (e.g. the recorded-music industry, live entertainment, film and video game production and distribution, or exhibitions). Increasing costs and/or operational barriers due to higher green standards could curtail the feasibility of some large-scale CCS events in certain Member States and not others. This perspective sets a basis for closer European cooperation to ensure a **level playing field for greening practices across the EU** so that major CCS events can be equally accommodated across all Member States.

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Endnotes

(⁴⁷) Seven ongoing projects, under the Horizon Europe Cluster 2 call dedicated to heritage, tackle the greening of the CCS or the role of culture and the arts in the sustainable climate transition: CRAFT-IT4SD, on how to build on heritage and crafts for sustainability (https://craft-it4sd.eu/); Strategies, on the game industry as a driver of sustainable innovation (https://www.strategieshorizon. eu/); Pacesetters, on culture, creativity and heritage to push the pace of climate transition (https://pacesetters.eu/); Just Fashion, to support the just transition of the fashion sector (https:// justfashionproject.eu/); Simiacci, on how to empower galleries, libraries, archives and museums to become the innovating leaders of indoor air quality management (https://simiacci.eu/); Emccinno, to equip SMEs in the CCS with tools for the sustainable climate transition (https://www.emccinno.eu/); and StreamScapes, on how video-on-demand platforms can promote the sustainable climate transition (https://www.streamscapes.eu). All links accessed 3 September 2025.

(⁴⁸) European Commission: European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency, IDEA Consult, Technopolis Group, Vuijlsteke, C., Voldere, I. d. et al., Monitoring the Twin Transition of Industrial Ecosystems – Cultural and creative industries – Analytical report, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/ publication/21fb6779-bff9-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1/ language-en.

(⁴⁹) The European skills agenda emphasises that the green transition requires investments in people's skills and presents a set of concrete measures to support the acquisition of skills for the green transition, including through the definition of a taxonomy of skills for the green transition. The European Classification of Occupations, Skills and Competences (ESCO) responded to this call to action by labelling relevant skills and knowledge concepts as 'green'. This action was followed by the publication of a technical report providing information about the labelling process, guiding ESCO implementers in their use of ESCO green concepts. More information: https://esco.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2025-01/ Green%20Skills%20and%20Knowledge%20-%20Labelling%20 ESCO.pdf.

(⁵⁰) Ensaéco (Réseau de l'enseignement de la transition écologique dans les écoles nationales supérieures d'architecture), *Le Livre Vert du Réseau Ensaéco*, http://ensaeco.archi.fr/manifestations/ livre-vert-reseau-ensaeco/

(⁵¹) European Union, New European Bauhaus, 'NEB Academy', accessed 3 September 2025, https://new-european-bauhaus. europa.eu/about/neb-academy_en.

(⁵²) Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigk, accessed 3 September 2025, https://aktionsnetzwerk-nachhaltigkeit.de/.

(⁵³) Aktionsnetzwerk Nachhaltigk: Österreich-Runde der Weiterbildung 'Transformationsmanager: in Nachhaltige Kultur', accessed 3 September 2025, https://aktionsnetzwerk-nachhaltigkeit.de/ oesterreich-runde/.

(⁵⁴) See Chapter 5.5 for more details.

(⁵⁵) See the Creative Europe call document, p. 7, accessed 3 September 2025, https://www.euro-access.eu/_media/file/632_ call-fiche_crea-cult-2025-lit_en.pdf.

(⁵⁶) Among different examples, European Commission, 'Energy efficiency upgrade for Rossini cinetheatre', accessed 3 September 2025, https://commission.europa.eu/projects/energy-efficiency- upgrade-rossini-cinetheatre_en?utm.

(⁵⁷) European Commission, 'Buildings at state-run arts schools across Poland made more energy efficient', accessed 3 September 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/projects/Europe/buildings- at-state-run-arts-schools-across-poland-made-more-energy- efficient?utm.

(⁵⁸) European Commission: Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 'Conditionality', Agriculture and Rural Development website, accessed 3 September 2025, https:// agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/income- support/conditionality_en.

(⁵⁹) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, 'Green public procurement', Green Forum website, accessed 3 September 2025, https://green-forum.ec.europa.eu/green- public-procurement_en.

(⁶⁰) Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, P. 17, ELI: https://eur-lex. europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX %3A32021R0241).

(⁶¹) UNESCO, 'Policy document on climate action for world heritage (2023)', 27 November 2023, accessed 3 September 2025, https:// whc.unesco.org/en/documents/204421.
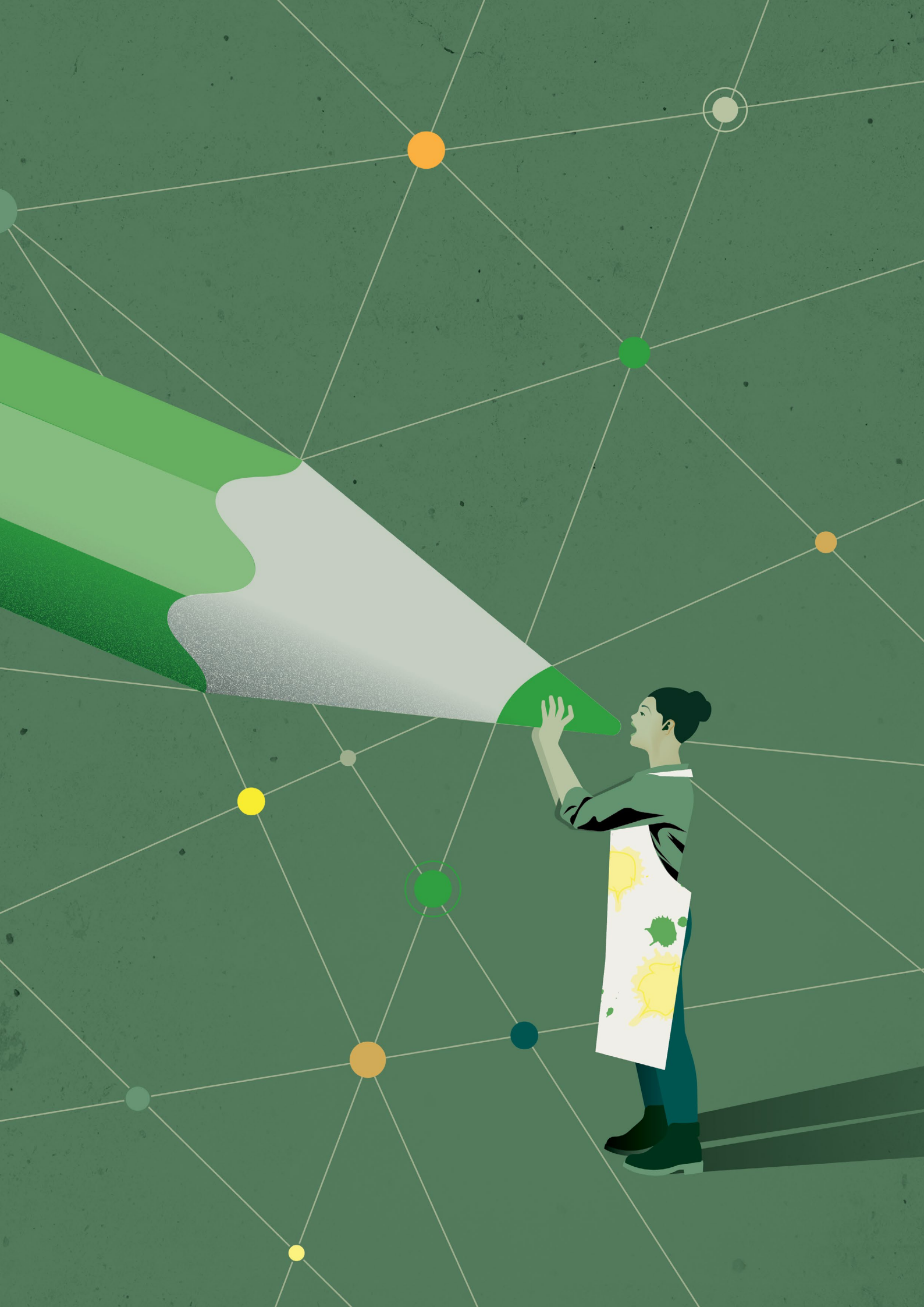
5. AMPLIFY

COOPERATING AND LEARNING FROM OTHERS ABOUT THE GREEN TRANSITION

To amplify the impact of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) in the green transition, the dissemination of good practices and knowledge about strategic choices is key. Amplification should be intentional and make use of existing and effective channels such as networks, platforms and events. Intentionality should also guide the messaging, as diverse stakeholders ranging from policymakers to the industry and their audiences are more likely to respond to communication that addresses their needs and interests. In terms of good practices, amplification is most likely to succeed when a practice is based on solid evidence, is clearly documented, includes measurement metrics and can be easily adapted to different subsectors or national contexts. Finally, effective amplification depends on human capacity, underlining the need to support education, training and other measures to build competence.

5.1. Key channels and audiences for amplification

According to the Cambridge dictionary, 'amplify' means 'to increase the size or effect of something'[62]. Based on that, this chapter will consider how to amplify the learnings and experiences presented in the previous chapters across the CCS and Member States. It also looks at what makes a 'good practice' good in supporting strategic and meaningful amplification efforts.

In short, amplification is about the dissemination of information and knowledge. Knowledge sharing fosters innovation by allowing ideas, experiences and expertise to flow between individuals and groups. This exchange of information leads to improved problem-solving, as diverse perspectives can identify solutions that might otherwise be overlooked and can identify pitfalls in solutions based on suboptimal experiences elsewhere and thereby avoid costly mistakes. Effective knowledge sharing requires organisational strategies and practices that encourage openness, collaboration and engagement. Two key elements in achieving effective knowledge sharing are networks and tools.

Networks

Whether formal (like professional associations) or informal (such as social media platforms), networks enable individuals from different locations or entities to exchange knowledge and share expertise. In terms of empowering the CCS to engage with the green transition, communities of practice represent an effective networking approach that provides a platform for ongoing learning, discussion and problem-solving. Additionally, **cross-sector collaboration** between technology companies, environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other industries can fuel innovation and lead to scalable sustainability solutions.

Tools

In recent times, digital channels have become particularly widespread as they offer wide reach and rapid communication, often at a relatively low cost. Collaborative forums allow real-time discussions and knowledge exchange, while webinars allow people to participate in seminars without the time and expense of travelling, increasing the potential take-up. Additionally, **gamification** and **interactive platforms** could play a significant role in engaging both industry professionals and the general public, making sustainability practices more accessible and attractive.

Key audiences for stimulating the green transition

An important step in determining the most effective amplification measures is to identify the audience groups and to consider how best to target these to inspire change. For our purpose of stimulating the green transition of the CCS, the key audiences include the following.

Policy

- European institutions
- National and regional governments
- Cultural institutions

Industry

- Producers
- Venue operators
- Artists and performers

People

- Audiences

Good practices and examples from peers not only inspire the will to make a change but also can provide a set of guidelines of how that change can be achieved. Importantly, the green transition should also prioritise equity and inclusion, ensuring that all groups, including marginalised communities, have access to the resources and opportunities presented by sustainability initiatives.

5.2. What makes good practices good and replicable?

Amplification benefits from a two-pronged, bottom-up approach. An effective tool should aim at raising awareness on the one hand, while presenting concrete goals to support strategic greening efforts on the other. Good practices with a high potential for successful amplification include ease of transferability, relevance across a wide cohort of stakeholders within the CCS and approaches that promulgate effective measures that move the sectors meaningfully towards the green transition. In addition to providing guidelines and frameworks, good practices incorporate robust data collection and measurement tools. Standardised metrics, such as carbon footprint calculators and waste tracking systems, are essential to gauging the effectiveness of sustainability measures. These tools not only allow organisations to monitor their progress but also provide valuable insights that can guide future improvements and facilitate benchmarking across different institutions.

Good practices in the CCS should not only focus on short-term goals but also aim for long-term sustainability. A clear, long-term vision for environmental responsibility in the CCS can help ensure that green transition efforts are deeply embedded into the cultural fabric. Establishing a culture of sustainability that spans decades will enable CCS organisations to continually adapt to new environmental challenges and innovations.

The Theatre Green Book ([63]) is an example of a good practice, providing clear guidelines and a structured framework. It empowers theatres across Europe to systematically reduce their environmental impact, in addition to aligning with broader EU sustainability goals and fostering cross-border collaboration in the CCS. The European Theatre Convention (ETC) has adopted it as the ETC Theatre Green Book, aiming for net-zero emissions across European theatres by 2030.

Looking at the survey results, a transferable practice should be simple, based on a tried-and-tested approach and accompanied by financial incentives for implementation. Our analysis offers further insight into the transferability of good practices. Cultural agents and operators consider clear guidelines and good practices documentation (27 %) the most important factor for transferability across Member States. The availability of funding and financial incentives for implementation (26 %) follows as a close second, followed by simplicity in terms of implementation in different contexts (24 %). Enabling regulatory frameworks (19 %) is also found to be important in the EU context.
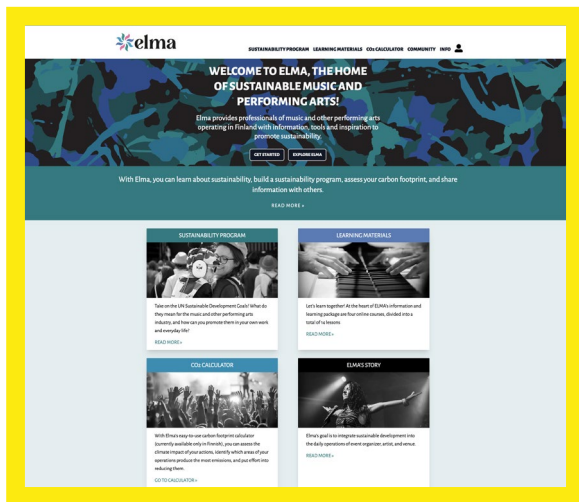
Elma, Finnish Jazz Federation, Finland

Launched in 2020, Elma is a digital platform that supports sustainable development in the live music industry by providing information, tools and community support. It offers educational resources, a tool for creating and monitoring sustainability programmes, a CO_2 calculator and a forum for knowledge exchange. Organisations can monitor their sustainability plans and carbon footprints using Elma. Initially developed for live music, Elma now includes other performing arts and aims to further guide the sectors in their sustainability efforts based on the UN SDGs.

Elma is both an amplifying platform and a collection of tools, which help the music and performing arts sectors to align their operations with the internationally recognised UN SDG framework. The platform takes on an integrated approach to the SDGs and carbon footprints, which serves as a good example of the potential of the CCS to make their operations green while producing added social and economic value.

https://www.elma.live/en

As illustrated by Elma, a good practice can build on sectoral or individual projects, growing and expanding to a national or even international level. The OMC survey reports that the majority of such initiatives are self-funded, which is one more argument that change begins with an individual effort, however good the strategy might be. The engines of change are cultural institutions in constant contact with audiences; nonetheless, this can be boosted by national, regional or international support mechanisms.

5.3. Good practices and effective channels

From sustainable design practices to eco-conscious performances and exhibitions, creative professionals are not only reshaping their own methods but also inspiring broader societal shifts. However, meaningful change requires more than isolated efforts. It depends on active knowledge-sharing, collaboration and access to inspiring examples.

By identifying and analysing good practices (platforms, networks, events, and digital tools that facilitate peer learning and dissemination), the aim is to highlight mechanisms and effective channels that support a more cohesive and impactful green transition across the CCS. Our analysis of the survey results clearly shows a preference for a mix of online and in-person methods of learning.

Online workshops and webinars were mentioned by one in four respondents. Their flexibility and wide reach allow people to take part quickly and efficiently in the activity regardless of their location. In-person training events were also highly valued, with 20 % of participants choosing this option. Face-to-face meetings still play an important role in building trust, allowing deeper discussions and strengthening professional networks. Sectoral associations and networks (20 %) and forums and other networking events (19 %) provide regular contact between peers and help promote collaboration and knowledge sharing across the sectors. Less popular were social media and podcasts (9 %) and CCS blogs and websites (7 %), which may be seen more as tools for communication rather than in-depth learning.

Figure 17: Effective communication channels for good practices as identified by survey respondents, in number of mentions.

90 Sectoral associations and networks

92 In-person training events

88 Forums and other networking events

109 Online workshops or webinars

What are the most effective channels for the CCS to share and learn from good practices and examples?

42 Social media and podcasts

29 CCS blogs and websites / online learning platforms / newsletters
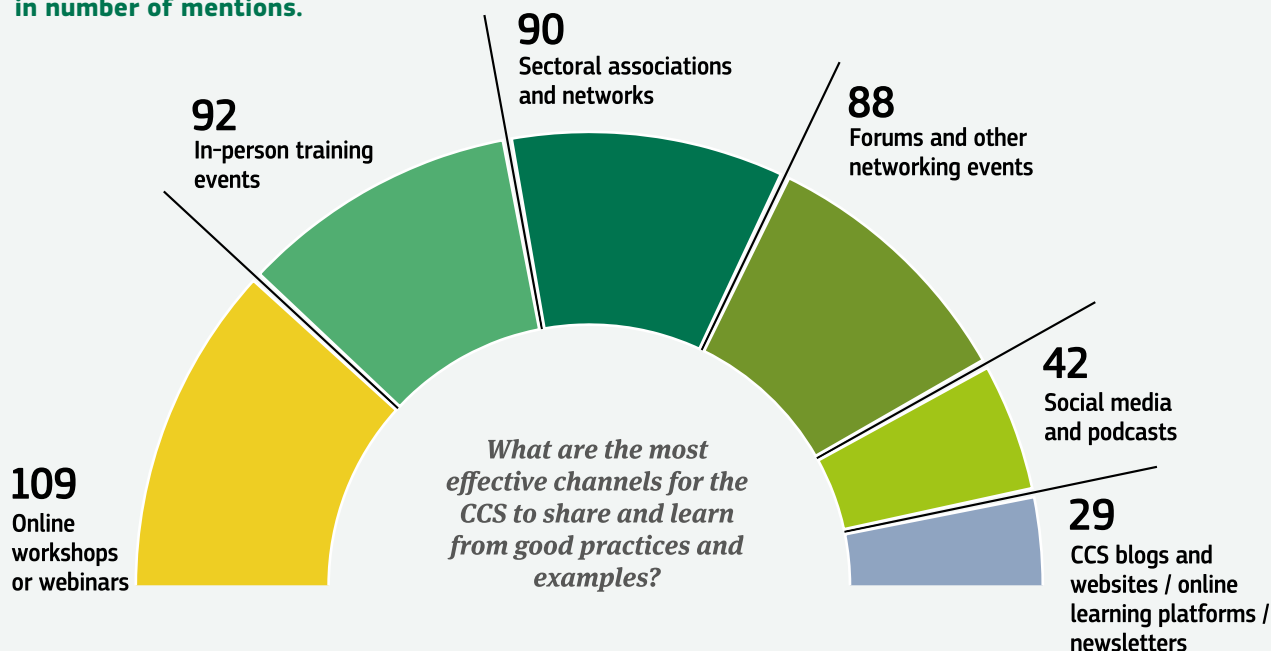
Our analysis suggests that the most effective way to support knowledge sharing in the CCS is **to combine online learning with in-person events**. These formats allow for both flexibility and strong collaboration, which are the key components in allowing the sector to grow and adapt in a sustainable way. A combination of flexible online formats and more personal, in-depth, in-person engagement is critical for building strong, sustainable professional networks.

The SHIFT ([64]) (shared initiatives for training on the SDGs) initiative uses both digital tools and in-person training to empower cultural leaders across Europe to address global challenges. It perfectly encapsulates the kind of practical hybrid approach to learning and knowledge transfer that the survey suggests is the most effective. By providing targeted training and resources, SHIFT has effectively empowered cultural leaders to implement sustainable and inclusive practices within their organisations, thereby contributing to a more equitable and sustainable society. The German model to establish green culture contact points is also relevant in this regard – see below and in Section 4.2.2.

GREEN CULTURE ANLAUFSTELLE

Green Culture Contact Point, Germany

Since September 2023, the Green Culture Contact Point (Green Culture Anlaufstelle) has been supporting the cultural, creative and media branches throughout Germany on the path to ecological transformation to prepare them for the challenges of the future. The Green Culture Contact Point is a competence platform supporting players and stakeholders in the CCS by providing knowledge, promoting networking, facilitating data collection, giving advice and informing stakeholders about resources for the ecological transformation of the CCS in Germany.

This national contact point is a project that was installed and is financed by the federal government's commissioner for culture and the media, departing from a national government mandate aiming at stimulating the green transition of the CCS in Germany. A core objective of the contact point is building networks for people working towards greener culture, in addition to promoting greening initiatives (training, good practices, or standards for greening the CCS) on all political levels.

https://www.greenculture.info/

From networks and industry-specific online platforms to face-to-face meetings and events, a variety of pathways exist for CCS professionals to share good practices and innovative approaches. However, maximising the impact of these channels requires ongoing investment in infrastructure, digital tools, capacity building and inclusive participation.

It is worth considering that engaging with the broader community is also vital for amplifying the green transition. Public art projects, sustainability-themed exhibitions or interactive performances can not only raise awareness but also inspire individuals to adopt more sustainable practices in their daily lives. Fostering a culture of openness and experimentation is also crucial to ensuring that knowledge flows freely across disciplines, regions and scales of practice. By adopting a collaborative approach and making sustainability a shared value, the CCS can strengthen their capacity to drive change and not only shape their own future but also contribute meaningfully to a greener world.

5.4. Lessons from other sectors

In addition to good practices identified within the CCS, lessons can be learned from effective amplification measures under way in other sectors. This section considers some strong examples of knowledge-sharing that have a high potential for replicability across the CCS. Cross-sectoral collaboration has proven successful in many industries and is highly beneficial in the context of the CCS. Partnerships with technology companies, environmental NGOs and sectors such as manufacturing or renewable energy can lead to innovative, scalable solutions for sustainability. By bringing together diverse expertise, the CCS can develop new materials, energy-efficient technologies and more sustainable operational models that might not otherwise emerge in isolated environments. For example, the Green Healthcare [65] programme, operated by the Health Services Executive in Ireland, aims to prevent waste, increase recycling and reduce water consumption in Irish healthcare facilities. Operating since 2009, the programme operates on a national scale in hospitals and clinics by providing sector-specific benchmarks, case studies and training to demonstrate good practices and inform investment decisions. This model of sectoral support and engagement could be applied to organisations across the CCS.

Along with national sectoral networks supporting the green transition, good practices for amplification can also take place at the pan-EU level. These offer the opportunity for trans-national learning and knowledge-sharing and can strengthen innovation and the take-up of new ideas. Like the CCS, tourism is a sector characterised by a wide variety of stakeholders (small and large) and with a strong drive to move to greener practices. The 'Together for EU tourism' initiative ([66]) is an EU-wide expert group supporting the 'Transition pathway for tourism'. It brings together Member State representatives along with organisations representing key tourism stakeholders and works through subgroups to examine specific issues related to the green and digital transitions of the tourism sector. It has established a collaborative platform for tourism stakeholders and gathered pledges to highlight successful initiatives, and it facilitates information exchange via meetings, webinars and reports. This network provides a good example for the CCS to consider in terms of establishing pan-EU support for fostering the green transition.

These examples support a clear focus and concrete measures, using on-site and online channels along with strategic approaches and links to EU sustainability priorities. These examples prove that cross-sectoral learning is possible as it can broaden horizons and induce thinking outside the box while working to achieve similar sustainability goals. Equally important is the understanding that sustainability is not only about environmental performance but also about promoting diversity, inclusion and social equity. Sustainability efforts that prioritise equitable access to resources, ensure representation from underrepresented communities and promote inclusive practices can broaden the impact of green initiatives and strengthen the overall resilience and relevance of the CCS in the face of global challenges.

5.5. Enabling amplification (building capacity)

Good practices, their replicability and the possibility for outreach (inside the CCS and beyond) is largely based on capacity building. For some cultural agents, this comes naturally as a part of personal or organisational growth; for others, it is beneficial to look for inspiration, skills and knowledge elsewhere.

Julie's Bicycle is a non-profit organisation that integrates environmental sustainability into creative practices through advocacy, tools like carbon calculators, and training programmes such as 'Creative climate leadership' [67]. This programme empowers CCS professionals to act on climate change, providing training, mentoring and support to integrate sustainability into creative practices, focusing on both individual and organisational transformation. The programme has trained participants from over 50 countries, with over 300 individuals completing the training and becoming active climate leaders in their creative sectors and communities. Creative climate leadership focuses on long-term cultural change and showcases good practices by combining expert guidance, practical tools, leadership development and cross-sector collaboration to drive real and measurable sustainability outcomes in the CCS.

Similarly, the below example demonstrates innovative capacity building by integrating environmental education into library services, promoting ecological awareness and SDGs.

Green Library, Karlovac, Croatia

The Green Library in Karlovac, Croatia's first energy-efficient library, serves as a hub for environmental education and sustainability. Since 2015, it has offered workshops, film screenings and public events promoting green practices. With a community-based approach, the initiative supports the UN's Agenda 2030 and collaborates with local institutions. Key performance indicators include event attendance and book circulation, with over 4 000 children participating in its first year, demonstrating its growing impact in fostering ecological awareness. It aims to integrate ecological awareness into the community by offering a variety of programmes and resources that focus on sustainable living, energy efficiency and environmental protection.

The Green Library initiative has been recognised for its innovative approach to integrating environmental education into library services, aligning with SDGs and fostering community engagement and capacity building.

https://letsgogreen.nsk.hr/green-library-in-karlovac/

These examples showcase the importance of leadership while sharing knowledge, organising training and networking within the CCS. Whether the capacity building and training has reached pan-European level or if it is working on a national or regional scale – the ability to show leadership and a desire for change and to invoke that in other cultural organisations or individuals is the key component of **amplification**.

5.6. Key messages

Amplification does not happen automatically; it requires **deliberate, structured systems**. Building networks, platforms and events that foster ongoing dialogue and peer-to-peer learning within and beyond the CCS is essential to ensuring knowledge and good practices can circulate effectively. **Tailoring communication** strategies to specific audiences – whether policymakers, cultural professionals, artists or the general public – further enhances engagement and effectiveness. Practices must be **transferable and impactful**, but they must also be **clear, evidence-based and adaptable**. Good practices grounded in robust data, yet flexible enough to adapt to diverse cultural and geographic settings, are more likely to inspire change and be adopted elsewhere.

Equally, **human capacity** remains the engine of meaningful transformation. Professionals and organisations need the appropriate skills, resources and leadership support to integrate sustainability into their creative and operational work. Training programmes, mentoring initiatives and access to practical tools all play a critical role in empowering action at every level.

Cross-sectoral knowledge exchange is also important, as learning from other industries can spark innovation and help those in the CCS adopt effective models that incorporate environmental, technological and social sustainability.

A variety of examples in the report illustrate how challenges such as fragmented knowledge, limited resources or lack of awareness can be addressed through well-structured initiatives. These include measures rooted in grassroots engagement, digital innovation, institutional leadership and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Amplification is not only about reach but also about relevance, inclusion and long-term transformation. Above all, sustainability efforts must be **inclusive**, promoting social equity, diversity and community participation alongside environmental goals. Amplification strategies should therefore prioritise broad accessibility and representation, ensuring all voices in the sectors are heard. Combining digital tools with in-person exchanges through hybrid formats supports both accessibility and trust, helping to build strong, inclusive professional communities.

Ultimately, the CCS can inspire behavioural, structural and societal change – provided that the right mechanisms exist to support learning and experimentation – and **advocate** for leadership development across the sectors.

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Endnotes

(62) Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 'Cambridge Dictionary – English Dictionary', accessed 2 September 2025, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/.

(63) Theatre Green Book, accessed 3 September 2025, https://theatregreenbook.com/.

(64) SHIFT Culture, accessed 3 September 2025, https://shift-culture.eu/.

(65) Health Services Executive, Green Healthcare programme, accessed 3 September 2025, https://greenhealthcare.ie/.

(66) European Union, EU Tourism Platform, accessed 3 September 2025, https://transition-pathways.europa.eu/tourism.

(67) Julie's Bicycle, 'Creative climate leadership', accessed 3 September 2025, https://juliesbicycle.com/our-work/creative-climate-leadership/.

6. ADVOCATE

MAINSTREAMING THE CCS INTO NATIONAL AND EU CLIMATE ACTION

This chapter highlights the value of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) on the journey towards net zero. It advocates for an understanding of the support that the CCS will require to realise their full potential as change makers. Furthermore, the chapter underscores the need for the EU to speak with one voice in international forums, to assume its place as a global change maker and advocate strongly for the inclusion of the voice of the CCS in the journey towards 'a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace' ([68]).

6.1. Advocating

To whom do we advocate, on behalf of whom do we advocate and why do we advocate? In this chapter, we seek to advocate to members of the CCS, to the local, regional and national governments of Member States and to the institutions of the EU itself. We advocate on behalf of the members of the CCS, on behalf of the citizens of the EU who deserve a shared vision of a future we are striving towards, and on behalf of the planet itself. We advocate to ensure that all those with an interest in the future of the EU, especially those who are seldom heard, have their voices heard and that the story of the EU continues to be one in which the 'peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values' ([69]).

6.2. European Union context

Within its borders, the aims of the EU include, among other things, the promotion of 'peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens'. It aims to achieve 'sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability and a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress', 'to protect and improve the quality of the environment' and to 'respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity'. Furthermore, in the wider world, the aims of the EU include upholding and promoting its values and interests and contributing to 'peace and security and the sustainable development of the Earth' ([70]).

The *Stormy Times* OMC report recognised a 'need to reconceive the relationship between humans and nature, and to fully appreciate the indispensable contribution of culture, as a twin of democracy, based on fundamental values and freedoms, to sustainability transformation' ([71]).

In 2022, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that 'social and cultural processes play an important role in shaping what actions people take on climate mitigation, interacting with individual, structural, institutional and economic drivers' ([72]). IPBES also emphasised that idea in 2024 ([73]). This international acknowledgement of the cultural aspects of climate change should provide the EU with the impetus to speak more boldly on the value of the CCS to the overall climate action and sustainability agenda of the EU. Based on this finding, a recent *Forbes* magazine article made a powerful argument for the involvement of the CCS in this agenda.

"For this radical transformation of culture towards climate action there is one resource needed that is thankfully unlimited in society – imagination. That mysterious and powerful attribute that neuroscientists are still baffled by.

We can't just mechanise our way out of climate change we must imagine our way. How? We won't do so with reports or research, but by telling new stories. That power is unmatched for one simple reason – humans believe stories.

Specifically, we believe anecdotes over evidence. Just for a moment, reflect on that. Even with all our post-Enlightenment critical thinking, compulsory education, science so advanced we can stare into the black hole of another galaxy...

In a fight between a story and a fact, the story will win' ([74])."

If the EU wishes that the CCS play a pivotal role on this change journey, it is vital that artists' and creatives' practices are supported. An understanding from the EU that funding for the arts is vital for functioning democracies, and that by providing that stability for the CCS, their ability to support society on its change journey will enable them to be the change makers they can be.

The European Green Deal

The European Green Deal ([75]) is an ambitious roadmap to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. It aims to transform the EU's economy by promoting sustainable growth, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting natural ecosystems. The plan includes investment in areas such as clean energy and the circular economy, while also promising a just transition for regions and workers affected by the green shift. To achieve these targets, the European Green Deal acts across seven key policy areas: climate, energy, industry, environment and oceans, agriculture, transport, and finance and regional development, each with relevance for the CCS in terms of both challenges and opportunities. The European Green Deal also recognises the importance of engaging all sectors, including culture, in achieving its ambitious goals.

It was recommended by the previous OMC Report, *Stormy Times*, that the European Green Deal be unpacked to 'fully include the cultural dimension of sustainability at strategic policy level, to empower and motivate people for change and develop a concerted approach, in consultation with the cultural and creative sector, to fully harness the power of culture in the Green Deal' ([76]). While these elements were not explicitly included in the European Green Deal, it clearly places the onus on other policy areas to support its vision and mission. The time has come for this ambition to be fully incorporated in the new Culture Compass.

The European Green Deal articulates that the EU sees itself as a global leader in the 'global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation'. It notes that by 'setting a credible example, and following up with diplomacy, trade policy, development support and other external policies, the EU can be an effective advocate'. Furthermore, it notes that the 'Commission and the High Representative will work closely with Member States to mobilise all diplomatic channels both bilateral and multilateral – including the United Nations, the G7, G20, the World Trade Organization and other relevant international fora' ([77]). The *European Cultural Heritage Green Paper* notes that the 'European Green Deal pledges that the EU will mobilise all diplomatic channels for "green deal diplomacy" to promote ambitious environment, climate, and energy policies across the world. In this context, the time is ripe to expand the EU's external relations action to include culture and heritage-based strategies in these vital efforts, both bilaterally and multilaterally' ([78]).

This paper also made key recommendations to policymakers, including expanding the 'EU's external action to include culture and heritage-based strategies for implementing the Paris Agreement, achieving the aims of the European Green Deal, and localising the SDGs' and training 'the cultural focal points in EU Delegations on the cultural dimension of climate action'. Furthermore, it recommended 'drawing up a comprehensive step-by-step approach to international cultural relations, including cross-cutting European Green Deal diplomacy and broader strategic communications with respect to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda' to support cultural heritage operators.

These recommendations are ones with which we wholeheartedly agree. The policy recommendations should form part of the Culture Compass. Furthermore, we recommend that the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture develop a toolkit to support the Member States' approach to international cultural relations, particularly considering the international attention that the role of culture in climate action and sustainability is receiving.

It is recommended that Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture support the greening of the CCS by 'translating' the language of the European Green Deal into language that is understood by CCS operators and stakeholders. A 'What does the European Green Deal require the CCS to do' type of guide would be useful, allowing language that would also reaffirm the value of the CCS, ensuring that artistic independence is not in question. A social media campaign that highlights what the CCS are doing to support the European Green Deal is also recommended, to ensure that the appropriate arms of the EU appreciate the level of impact that the CCS have on society. As noted in *Stormy Times*, 'the European Green Deal can, and should, also tackle the underlying attitudes, cultural habits and values of Europeans to pave the way for a more sustainable way of life and achieve the necessary rapid changes' ([79]).

6.3. Examples of good practices at the EU level

As noted in the *Stormy Times* report, the 'Green Deal challenges Europeans to change the way they live and the way they think. Such transformational cultural change needs artists and cultural organisations to play a full part' ([80]). There are some wonderful examples of this across the EU, from the local to national and multinational levels, of artists and creatives doing just that.

We have chosen to focus on EU-level programmes to highlight the work being done across the structures of the EU to support the European Green Deal. What is sometimes missing, however, is not the scope and ambition of the programme itself but the scope and ambition of the messaging on the value of these programmes from the Commission. As previously noted, the European Green Deal mandates other policy areas to deliver on the Green Deal within their sector, which is laudable; however, a joined-up approach to communication on all programmes at the EU level that support the aims and values of the Green Deal is required.

New European Bauhaus

> *"If the European Green Deal has a soul, then it is the New European Bauhaus which has led to an explosion of creativity across our Union."*
> *(Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission)*

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an EU policy and funding initiative that engages the CCS in making the ecological transition – in both built and non-built environments – enjoyable, attractive and practical for all. Under the motto 'sustainable, beautiful, inclusive', this initiative promotes culture-based solutions to enable the green transition, with a clear, respectful approach to local communities and ensuring that no one is left behind. The NEB is committed to citizen participation, the provision of tools and guidance and the offering of tailored solutions to different communities. The NEB seeks to combine innovation, ambition and creativity and 'calls on all Europeans to imagine and build a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds and souls' ([81]).

The NEB has developed the NEB Compass, which articulates that to 'achieve the goals of the European Green Deal and the transition towards a sustainable society, a fundamental change needs to happen on many levels'. It notes that on the 'individual level, sustainability depends critically on compassion, empathy, unity, creativity, and the ability to shift paradigms. People will embrace or drive change when they see it' ([82]). We welcome the creative and hopeful language used by the NEB. It should be used as a model of how to communicate the beauty of the inclusion of the CCS in programmes within the European Green Deal. The NEB Compass is a notable example, showing how the CCS can be fully integrated into programmes and initiatives.

Additional support in integrating the cultural elements of the NEB would improve overall outcomes. We would recommend training on engagement and climate leadership in a cultural context. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for the NEB Compass to integrate evaluation toolkits to increase the body of evidence-based research that shows how vital culture is to supporting society's journey towards a sustainable future.

Creative Europe

Creative Europe is the European Commission's flagship programme to support the culture and audiovisual sectors. The Creative Europe programme 2021–2027 has a budget of EUR 2.44 billion and invests in initiatives that reinforce cultural diversity and respond to the needs and challenges of the CCS [83]. In 2023, Creative Europe published a study on *Greening the Creative Europe Programme* [84], and the recommendations of the study were implemented in three separate documents: the 'Creative Europe programme greening strategy', the 'Good environmental practices guide for the Creative Europe programme' and the 'Creative Europe monitoring guide for programme greening'.

While these materials were developed for the Creative Europe programme, they are of value to all projects, initiatives and entities looking to support the greening of the CCS. The comprehensive guides should be promoted more widely than simply within the Creative Europe programme, and Member States should look to either replicate these guidelines or simply promote their use within their own grant funding schemes.

However, while the strategy and associated guides support the CCS themselves, they do not support the CCS in advocating for the role they play in wider society. We recommend that the Creative Europe programme develop a suite of resources to enable the sectors to understand their value, support the evaluation of this area of work and provide the sectors with language to advocate for themselves. These resources could include sample social media posts/materials, language for press releases or language for briefings for government officials to enable them to show the value of their sectors to an audience who may not usually engage with them. As noted in *Stormy Times*, 'art and culture can be used to visualise challenges and dilemmas, help imagine solutions and empower change, addressing worries and fears' [85], but artists and creatives need support in selling that message.

The European Green Capital and European Green Leaf awards

The European Green Capital and European Green Leaf awards have linked themselves to the ambitions of the European Green Deal, the New European Bauhaus and the Zero Pollution Action Plan. The awards note that as an urban society, Europe has 'many environmental challenges to face' and that the EU recognises the significant role 'that local authorities play in improving the environment, and their high level of commitment to genuine progress' [86].

The awards recognise and reward local action aimed at moving towards a greener, more sustainable future. Winning cities are involving their residents in this shift, enhancing the urban environment, combating pollution and mitigating and preparing to become more resilient to climate change. A greener city is a place that attracts investors and tourists while offering an improved quality of life for its residents.

These initiatives have been beneficial in supporting cities on a journey to a greener, more sustainable future. The toolkits provided, while extremely helpful, are more technical in nature. We recommend that a toolkit on engagement be developed by the Directorate-General on Climate Action to support the work of communities across the cities involved. This toolkit should highlight that arts and culture can play a pivotal role in community engagement and education, promoting a deeper understanding of the action individuals and communities can take towards achieving climate goals. Furthermore, this toolkit should be activated within the European Capital of Culture network by the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. The EU has many resources across its networks, and it would be better served by ensuring that work is not replicated across the directorates-general. We recommend that a short desk-based research piece is undertaken to compile all resources available across the Commission that might apply to the CCS and work with Member States to disseminate this information to the sectors.

6.4. The Culture Compass for Europe

The EU's upcoming Culture Compass [87] is a roadmap conceived to elevate culture, support artists and boost creative sectors across the region. It seeks to place culture at the centre of the EU's policymaking across different sectors and industries, with the aim of ensuring that Europe continues to be a global cultural centre and a global leader in the CCS and of leveraging the power of culture to build bridges. This ambitious framework also identifies the richness and diversity of culture and its potential to promote societal resilience and to reaffirm European values, including democracy.

In March 2025, Glenn Micallef, the Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, hosted a high-level stakeholder meeting in Brussels on a new Culture Compass for Europe, the Commission's future guiding framework for cultural policy initiatives. He said that 'a strong cultural and creative sector is a hallmark of a healthy democracy'. In an era of significant upheaval, Europe requires a 'Culture Compass – a strategic tool to guide policymakers, stakeholders, and practitioners alike'. Cultural richness cannot exist if creative and cultural workers face financial difficulties. 'They play a vital role in strengthening Europe's social and economic fabric, so their working conditions should give them security'. He noted that he eagerly anticipated hearing and engaging with all opinions on how to ensure culture remains the essential heartbeat of European society [88]. Commissioner Micallef noted that culture should not be viewed solely as the domain of the arts but 'as a strategic asset embodying collective identity, heritage, and a future potential for the continent'. He also noted that if global and societal shifts, such as climate issues and increasing inequalities, necessitate collaborative efforts across sectors, then culture serves as 'both a diagnostic tool and a responsive mechanism' for understanding complex changes and offering innovative solutions. The Culture Compass will focus on bridging national differences and fostering a more integrated cultural landscape [89].

The recent Irish study, *Creative C-Change*, noted that the arts have prevailed in evolution because they have survival value for humans by helping to cement social groups and that social cohesion is a 'major determinant of acceptance of climate mitigation policies, especially through institutional and social trust' [90]. Therefore, the arts and the wider CCS can serve as a platform for dialogue and deliberation on climate policies and initiatives, enabling diverse voices to be heard and fostering inclusive decision-making processes. This can enhance the legitimacy and support for climate initiatives among the broader public. The Culture Compass must look to advocate for the importance of the voice of the CCS on the journey towards sustainability.

The Culture Compass must look to ensure that if the CCS are to provide a pivotal role in promoting sustainability through the CCS, sustainability in the CCS needs to be accelerated. The CCS need to avoid the accusation that they do not have their own house in order. There is a wealth of material available, particularly through EU-level programmes such as 'Culture moves Europe – Environmental sustainability tips' [91] and previously mentioned material from Creative Europe. Therefore, what is required from the Culture Compass is a clear direction on what the CCS need to do to fulfil their obligations under the European Green Deal, ensuring that the language used is understandable and relevant to the CCS.

Finally, the Culture Compass must look to ensure the sustainability of the CCS. To achieve this, there is a need for organisational, career and project sustainability in the CCS, including financial stability and working conditions. The Culture Compass should work with other entities within the EU to ensure that the rights afforded to all sectors are being equally applied to the CCS and ensure that the CCS are fully informed of employment rights.

6.5. The international landscape

On another level, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN member states in 2015, provides a shared global plan for promoting sustainability, through the 17 SDGs [92], which address a wide range of global challenges, including climate change and environmental degradation. It must be noted that, while culture is explicitly mentioned in a very limited number of specific SDG targets, its broader contribution is now being widely acknowledged: engaging with culture is seen as essential for achieving many of the SDGs, from poverty reduction to climate action. The UN Pact for the Future [93], adopted in 2024, reinforces this key role of culture.

The UN special rapporteur in the field of cultural rights ([94]) emphasised in her report in 2020 that comprehensive cultural change will be necessary to alter the trajectory of catastrophic climate change, and that traditional knowledge is indispensable to interacting with and caring for natural systems. Even so, many environmental policies do not address culture, while many cultural policies do not refer to the environment; in addition, both sets of policies may fail to incorporate a human rights approach, which has been termed the 'missing link' ([95]). On the other side, many necessary mitigation and adaptation measures, such as those related to addressing the use of fossil fuels, may require cultural change according to human rights norms. Following the UN special rapporteur, culture and cultural rights are prime casualties in the climate emergency, but also useful tools in our struggle to respond to it.

Efforts to achieve recognition of the need to mainstream climate and environmental issues in culture policymaking, along with better representing cultural considerations in climate policy, were boosted in 2021, when the ministers of culture of the G20 ([96]), meeting under the Italian Presidency of the G20, for the first time recognised culture's role and its potential in leading to solutions to address climate change. They called for integrating cultural dimensions into climate change policies and mainstreaming cultural considerations into the global climate agenda, organising the first Ministerial Dialogue on Culture at the 26th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP26). Culture and cultural heritage were also highlighted as part of the 'Action for climate empowerment' agenda aimed at implementing work under Article 6 of the UNFCCC and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, accelerate climate-positive behaviour change and foster systemic transformation.

Meanwhile, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) promoted the creation of the Climate Heritage Network ([97]), the largest global advocacy network, mobilising more than 500 cultural organisations on climate action advocacy, and together with UNESCO and the IPCC organised the first ever Meeting on Culture, Heritage and Climate Change ([98]). This further contributed to achieving progress in the anchoring of culture within the UNFCCC and other global endeavours on climate action and in national policies and plans. This

effort culminated at COP28 in Dubai (2023) with the inclusion of cultural heritage and traditional knowledge among the thematic targets of the 'Global goal on adaptation' and funding of non-economic loss (which includes culture and heritage) among the core components of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) under the UNFCC[99].

Moreover, in 2024, the ministers of culture of the G7 ([100]), under the Italian Presidency, committed to 'fostering the ecological transition of the cultural and creative sectors and industries and cultural institutions, providing strategic guidance and encouraging the development of tools, models and practices that augment their capacity to address environmental issues as well as their ability to raise awareness, sensitise and promote concrete action and behavioural change, contributing to climate action'. The G7 Culture Declaration was echoed in the **first-ever reference to culture in the European Union Council conclusions on the preparations for COP29** in Baku (2024), which notes the damage produced by extreme climatic events on tangible and intangible cultural heritage and the power of culture and heritage to raise awareness and activate synergies across all levels of society to take climate action, welcoming the inclusion of the protection of cultural heritage in the United Arab Emirates framework for global climate resilience.

With the creation of the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action (GFCBCA) at the **UNFCCC** ([101]), more progress is expected to be achieved at COP30 in Belém (Brazil) in November 2025, aiming at the first ever **work programme on culture-based climate action at the UNFCCC**. Prior to COP30, the global culture sector will meet at the UNESCO's World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development – Mondiacult 2025 with the goal of supporting GFCBCA's goals by establishing a consensus on culture and cultural heritage as strong levers for accelerating effective implementation of the mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage agendas.

World Heritage and Renewable Energy, UNESCO

Heritage and renewable energy technologies must coexist in our landscapes. Facing this reality, UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN presented in 2025 a *Guidance on Wind and Solar Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context*[102], providing practical advice for States Parties, site managers, planners, developers and other stakeholders on how to align the protection of World Heritage properties with renewable energy development, particularly wind and solar energy projects. As UNESCO mentions, "appropriate guidance could help to avoid and solve problems related to conflicting interests stemming from the inevitable need to shift energy production to renewable sources, allowing for the benefits that this can bring through sustainable development, and protect (…) cultural and natural World Heritage properties".

#Culture2030Goal campaign ([103]) 'addresses the absence of comprehensive coverage of culture issues in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)'. A growing international call for a stand-alone SDG on culture after 2030 is continuing apace. Culture Action Europe's 'A culture goal is essential for our common future' ([104]) notes that advocacy to 'build a coalition of state "champions", which is a crucial mechanism through which shared objectives can be pursued, needs to recognise diverse but not incompatible views among culture stakeholders'.

The 2021 *European Cultural Heritage Green Paper* ([105]) makes a key recommendation to policymakers to broaden the EU's external initiatives to incorporate culture and heritage-centred strategies for implementing the Paris Agreement, realising the goals of the European Green Deal and localising the SDGs, leveraging the global strategy for the EU's foreign and security policy. We agree wholeheartedly with this statement and recommend that the EU play a key role in strengthening global recognition of culture's pivotal role in climate action, advocating for its integration into climate policy and planning at all levels, namely in multilateral processes, such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the UN Agenda 2030, the G20 and other relevant international and

European organisations. Specifically, we recommend that the EU and its Member States build on the political momentum that COP30 and its Brazilian Presidency may provide for the recognition of culture as a powerful force in climate change policy.

The 2021 *European Cultural Heritage Green Paper* ([106]) also recommends training the cultural focal points in EU delegations on the cultural dimensions of climate action. They note that complementary training for cultural heritage operators on the 'approach to international cultural relations, including cross-cutting European Green Deal diplomacy and broader strategic communications with respect to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda' is also recommended.

6.6. Europe's voice

A key recommendation of this OMC is that the EU seek to speak with one voice on the role of the CCS in climate action and sustainability. We provide material in the next section that could be incorporated into training material, speaking notes or even the Culture Compass itself. The EU can have considerable influence on the direction of international policy and opinion if it speaks with one voice. The European Union, which has a seat at the G7 and the G20, plays a significant role in the UNFCCC process, actively participating in negotiations and striving to enhance global climate action. The CCS can bolster the EU's efforts at the intersections of climate change, conflict, food insecurity, poverty, displacement and migration, thereby promoting a just transition worldwide.

In particular, it is essential that the messages from this OMC are conveyed at COP30 in Belém (Brazil), where global efforts will converge towards the adoption of the first ever work programme on culture-based climate action at the UNFCCC.

Unlocking the cultural dimension of climate action

A model narrative for EU policymakers

The European Union is a global frontrunner in the pursuit of climate neutrality and a sustainable future. To fulfil the objectives of the European Green Deal and deliver meaningful outcomes, we must adopt a unified approach that combines innovation and collaboration.

Culture, the arts and the broader creative sectors offer a wide range of media and channels that can communicate climate science in ways that are accessible, human-centred and emotionally resonant. Translating data into compelling narratives and visual expression can help citizens across Europe connect with the urgency and the possibility for action on climate, biodiversity and environmental protection.

We should also seize the opportunity to co-create a compelling vision that is built on strong communities and effective collective action. Through the sharing of experiences and practices, we can combine the unique insights of creative minds with the expertise of climate scientists, sustainability experts and community engagement specialists.

It is vital that the EU and its Member States value the contribution that artists and creatives make in this journey towards sustainability. Supporting our creative and cultural sectors is not just an investment in the arts; it is an investment in Europe's collective capacity to navigate complexity, foster solidarity and reimagine our shared future. To underpin progress on the EU's overall goals and our path to net zero, it is crucial that artists and creatives are supported in maintaining and growing their practices.

Imagination can inspire action and motivate lasting change. The creative and design-thinking skills of our sectors should be utilised to highlight the benefits of the green transition, both for today and for the years ahead. In this way, artists and creatives can play a crucial role as catalysts of change. To realise this potential, we must position culture and creativity at the core of sustainable development processes and empower our sectors for the *Creative Shift*.

6.7. Key messages

The alignment of EU sustainability goals with the IPCC's recognition of culture as a core dimension of climate change should serve as a catalyst for stronger and more impactful advocacy in this area.

This contribution must be recognised as a strategic force across all relevant policy domains. This includes the European Green Deal and the institutions tasked with its implementation, which can strategically harness the CCS to address the underlying attitudes, habits and cultural values that shape our way of life, accelerating the **cultural shift** that is essential to achieving the rapid changes required for a sustainable future.

The **Culture Compass** must reflect this dual responsibility, and EU-level funding mechanisms should be designed from the outset to include the perspectives of the CCS and to strengthen the sectors' sustainability.

To further enable this, the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and the Directorate-General for Climate Action should promote the integration of the CCS into key sustainable development programmes across the bloc, such as the New European Bauhaus and European Green Capital, along with consistently integrating **environmental considerations into EU support for the CCS**, from the current Creative Europe programme to the next AgoraEU programme and beyond. This would require the development of tools such as resources for use in international cultural relations and Green Deal diplomacy, including adaptable messaging for cultural operators.

Just as crucial is the **translation of the Green Deal into the language of the CCS**, through resources that clarify the sectors' role, responsibilities and opportunities in this policy area. Through these efforts, the CCS can be mobilised as agents of community engagement and education, to deepen the public understanding of sustainability and encourage individual and collective action.

Finally, the EU has an opportunity – and a responsibility – to speak more boldly on the global stage of the climate and sustainability agenda about the **vital role of the CCS as a formidable driver of change capable of influencing behaviours, shifting norms and catalysing systemic transformation**. The EU must strive to speak with one unified voice, championing the contribution of the CCS in a consistent manner as a core enabler of the global transition towards a more sustainable future. Europe has a strong platform from which to lead by example – now is the time to use it.

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PRECONDITIONS FOR ACTION

The cultural and creative sectors (CCS) occupy a unique position in terms of the green transition. Like other economic and societal activities, sectoral operations consume significant resources and energy, causing an environmental burden that should be mitigated. However, the CCS also have a critical role in leading cultural and societal change, and in a more fractured world, this role is now more important than ever. Without interfering with the freedom of artistic expression, there is clearly an important opportunity to leverage this capability to prompt Europe's citizens to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

As experts working under this OMC dual mandate, we provide the following overarching reflections, which can be regarded as preconditions for stimulating the green transition in the CCS:

- **Use existing tested and trusted measures.** There are already many tools and initiatives to stimulate the green transition, such as financial incentives or sustainability criteria, and these can also be applied to the CCS.

- **Maintain funding for culture and creativity.** Ensure that funding for the green transition is sourced from existing sustainability budget measures, so that funding to the CCS is not diminished to provide green financing.

- **Sustainability must be inclusive.** Environmental action should go hand in hand with promoting social equity, diversity and community participation. Amplification efforts should ensure that sustainability benefits are widely accessible and representative of all voices and audiences within the sectors.

- **Build from local to global.** Measures to green the CCS should always be situated and should be place sensitive. In addition to European action to green the CCS, this should also be built at a global level around the key principles of environmental justice and partnership.

- **Engagement for motivation.** Cultural and creative expression can stimulate and support action on climate change by engaging policymakers and the public though novel channels that make complex issues more relatable and build emotional connections with the subject.

- **Leverage the power of the CCS.** Recognise and grow the role of artists and creative professionals as key players in climate action at the global level (culture for green) and the need to effect decarbonation and biodiversity restoration in the CCS (green for culture).

- **Human capacity is the engine of change**. Individuals and institutions need the appropriate skills, tools and creative leadership support to implement sustainable practices.
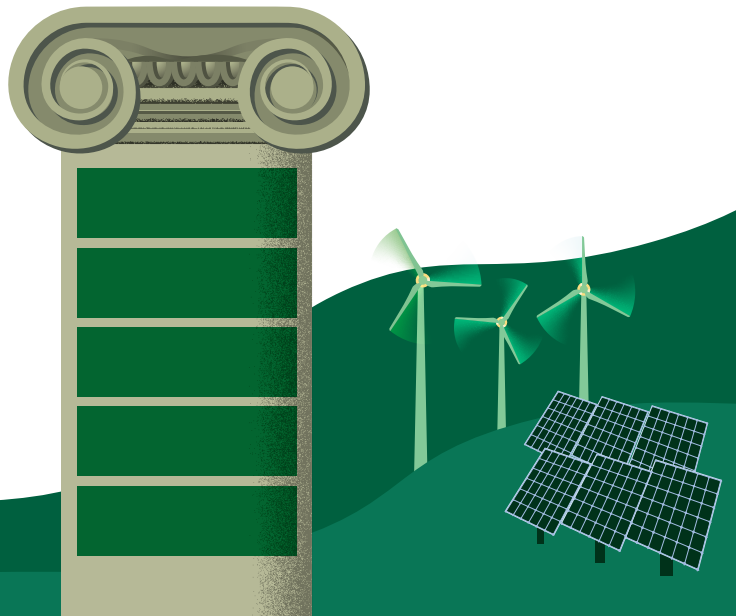
ANNEX I

OMC GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Country	Participant	Organisation	Expertise
Belgium	**Eline Zerelik**	Team Transversal Policy – Department of Culture, Youth and Media, Flanders	Culture
Belgium	**Roland Vanderhoeven**	General Administration of Culture – Wallonia-Brussels Federation	Culture
Czechia	**Ilja Kocian**	Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic	Culture
Germany	**Sophie Pfaff**	Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media	Culture
Germany	**Tessa Kazmeier**	Ministry of Sciences, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg	Culture
Ireland	**Shane Colgan**	Strategic Policy Unit, Department of Culture, Communications and Sport	Environment
Ireland	**Adele Mealey**	Creative Ireland Programme, Department of Culture, Communications and Sport	Culture
Ireland	**Catherine Ryan**	Cultural Policy and NCI Capital Programme Unit, Department of Culture, Communications and Sport	Culture
Greece	**Maira Matsimani**	Section of European Programs, International Synergies and Entrepreneurship Promotion / Directorate for the Development of Contemporary Creation / General Directorate of Contemporary Culture / Hellenic Ministry of Culture	Culture
Greece	**Georgios Kakavas**	General Directorate of Contemporary Culture / Hellenic Ministry of Culture	Culture
Greece	**Katerina Tselou**	Section of European Programs, International Synergies and Entrepreneurship Promotion / Directorate for the Development of Contemporary Creation / General Directorate of Contemporary Culture / Hellenic Ministry of Culture	Culture
Greece	**Vasilis Nikorelos**	Directorate of Climate Change and Atmospheric Quality / General Directorate of Environmental Policy / Ministry of Environment and Energy	Environment
Spain	**María Agúndez Leria**	General Sub Directorate of Coordination and Management of Cultural Assets – Cultural Landscape and Industrial Heritage Area, Ministry of Culture and Sport	Culture
Spain	**Antonio Jesús Antequera Delgado**	General Sub Directorate of Coordination and Management of Cultural Assets – Cultural Landscape and Industrial Heritage Area, Ministry of Culture and Sport	Culture
Spain	**Paloma Ramos Fernández**	General Sub Directorate for International Relations, Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge	Environment
France	**Patrick Comoy**	Ministry of Culture	Culture
France	**François Lemal**	General Commission for Sustainable Development	Environment

Country	Participant	Organisation	Expertise
Croatia	Jelena Panić Grazio	Ministry of Culture and Media	Culture
Croatia	Maja Adžija	Ministry of Culture and Media	Culture
Italy	Erminia Sciacchitano	Minister's Cabinet, Ministry of Culture	Culture
Latvia	Lāsma Krastiņa-Sidorenko	Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia	Culture
Lithuania	Reda Aleliūnaitė	Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania	Culture
Hungary	János Halász	Ministry of Culture and Innovation	Culture
Hungary	Panna Hanák	Ministry of Energy	Environment
Malta	Nicole Borg	Arts Council Malta	Culture
Malta	Simone Inguanez	Arts Council Malta	Culture
Netherlands	Jelle Burggraaff	DutchCulture	Culture
Netherlands	Niels van de Kamer	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	Culture
Austria	Meena Lang	Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport	Culture
Austria	Regina Preslmair	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management	Environment
Poland	Anna Węgorek	Ministry of Culture and National Heritage	Culture
Poland	Marta Koreniecka	Ministry of Climate and Environment	Environment
Portugal	Ana Cláudia Silveira	GEPAC – Cultural Strategy, Planning and Assessment Bureau / Museus e Monumentos de Portugal	Culture
Portugal	Ana Castela Rodrigues	International Relations Department, Ministry of Environment and Climate Action	Environment
Romania	Alexandra Preda	Ministry of Culture	Culture
Romania	Maria Neneciu	Ministry of Culture	Culture
Slovenia	Jasna Blaj	Ministry of Environment, Climate and Energy	Environment
Slovenia	Urška Kavčič	Ministry of Culture	Culture
Slovakia	Dária Hamajová	Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic	Culture
Slovakia	Miriama Benková	Slovak Arts Council	Culture
Finland	Emma Harju	Ministry of Education and Culture	Culture
Finland	Kimmo Aulake	Ministry of Education and Culture	Culture
Finland	Suvi Borgström	Ministry of the Environment	Environment
Sweden	Jelena Jesic	Swedish Arts Council	Culture
Sweden	Patrik Axén	The Swedish Film Institute	Culture

ANNEX II

POLICYMAKERS' SURVEY QUESTIONS

Green transition of the cultural and creative sectors: Survey for Policymakers

The European Commission has set up an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Group of Member States' experts on 'Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis', under the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 (Priority A: 'Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors').

The overall aim of this OMC Group is to define ways to identify effective policy solutions and policy tools or strategies to support and accompany the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) in the green transition at regional, national and European levels, as well as explore how to strengthen the cross-sectoral collaboration between cultural and environmental sustainability policies in the EU and in the Member States.

The following questionnaire aims to compile an overview of the state of play in European Member States. It will help identify good strategies and practices and discover gaps and needs for supporting the green transition.

The responses to this questionnaire will not be made public. They will be considered by the team drafting the report to obtain general data on the situation in Europe. Data will be deleted after this use. In turn, some good practices may be chosen to be included and mentioned in the future report, for which the responsible institution or practitioner would be consulted in advance for agreement.

**A maximum of 2 responses is foreseen per Member State (one from the Cultural ministry and another one for an Environment policy related ministry).

1. Please, specify the Member State you represent

Austria/Belgium/Bulgaria/Croatia/Cyprus/Czechia/ Denmark/Estonia/Finland/France/Germany/Greece/ Hungary/Ireland/Italy/Latvia/Lithuania/Luxembourg/ Malta/Netherlands/Poland/Portugal/Romania/ Slovakia/Slovenia/Spain/Sweden

2. Please, specify which Ministry you represent *

Culture/ Environment-Climate/Others

3. As a policymaker, what do you consider is needed for the CCS to adopt greening policies? (several options can be selected)

Support from international institutions/Open-source tools facilitated by international and/or European organisations/Policies at national level/More capacity-building and learning processes/Financial programmes/Tax exemptions/More commitment from sector and agents/Monitoring and evaluation systems/ Others

4. Does the institution you represent finance the greening of culture with specific tools (e.g. including green criteria in cultural funding schemes)?

Yes/No/No answer

5. If you provide any incentives and attach any conditions (eg. green criteria) to your support, are these... (several options can be selected)

Voluntary commitments from cultural actors?/Binding criteria?/Mandatory for all projects?/Optional but encouraged?/Part of a scoring system for evaluation?/ Specific to certain types of projects?/Linked to specific funding or incentives?/No answer/Others

6. In conducing greening policies, does the institution you represent have any mechanisms to compensate specific realities or possible inequalities among cultural actors (such as for different scale entities, geographical location or other discriminations)?

Yes/No/No answer

7. What existing not culture-specific greening policies could serve as inspiration for the CCS or are already benefiting the CCS? (limited characters)

8. What greening policies have not worked well and could be useful lessons for the CCS? (limited characters)

9. What data do you collect regarding the greening of CCS (ecological footprint of cultural institutions)? (several options)

General data, national level tendencies/Specific projects and best practices/Information about energy saving/Information about climate change adaptation/Information about carbon footprint/Others

10. How do you use the collected data on the greening of CCS (ecological footprint of cultural institutions)? (several options)

Create a report and make it public/Use the information to create better policies/Data are not yet adequately used after their compilation/Others

11. How do you monitor the success of existing initiatives? (several options)

Improvements in greening (better data results)/ Assessment of the entity itself/Sustainability of the initiative (extension of time, permanence)/ Replicability/Others

12. Is there a policy initiative or tool you would be willing to present in a short, online interview?

13. Are you aware of other initiatives in your country financing the greening of CCS at national or federal, regional, local level? Please name and share a link

14. Any other comments you may want to share?

15. If you agree, please, provide your name and email address, to contact you in case the team is interested in deepening any of your responses. Thank you.

Thank you for your participation!

CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS' SURVEY QUESTIONS

Green transition of the cultural and creative sectors: Survey for cultural agents and institutions

The European Commission has set up an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Group of Member States' experts on 'Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis', under the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 (Priority A: 'Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors').

In particular, the group will address two key challenges regarding to the 'underused power of culture' in the context of the Green Deal goals:

There is a high risk that the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) are left behind the green transition: they should therefore be accompanied and enabled to adapt.

There is a strong potential and key role for arts and culture to contribute to positive shifts of attitudes and practices and to shape the green transition and climate action in Europe.

The following questionnaire aims to compile an overview of the state of play in European Member States. It will help identify good strategies and practices and discover gaps and needs for supporting the green transition.

The responses to this questionnaire will not be made public. They will be considered by the team drafting the report to obtain general data on the situation in Europe. Data will be deleted after this use. In turn, some good practices may be chosen to be included and mentioned in the future report, for which the responsible institution or practitioner would be consulted in advance for agreement.

Part 1 – About you

1. What Member State if your organisation based in?

Austria/Belgium/Bulgaria/Croatia/Cyprus/Czechia/Denmark/Estonia/Finland/France/Germany/Greece/Hungary/Ireland/Italy/Latvia/Lithuania/Luxembourg/Malta/Netherlands/Poland/Portugal/Romania/Slovakia/Slovenia/Spain/Sweden/(pan)European/International

2. What subsectors of the CCS if your organisation working in? (Select all that apply)

Architecture/Archives/Libraries and museums/Artistic crafts/Audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia)/Tangible and intangible cultural heritage/Design (including fashion design)/Festivals/Music/Literature/Performing arts/Books and publishing/Radio/Visual arts

3. What type of entity are you representing?

Public institution/Cultural enterprise – private sector/Civil society organisation – cultural association/Independent artist – consultant/Others

4. If you agree, please provide the name of your organisation, a contact name and email address, in case the team is interested in further exploring these responses.

Part 2 – Your organisation's experience in greening

5. Has your organisation increased its investments in sustainability and green initiatives over the past five years?

Yes/No/I don't know

6. Through this effort has your organisation found cost-effective solutions for integrating the green transition into your work practices?

Yes/No/No answer

7. If YES, please give examples of the actions taken

8. How does your organisation fund the implementation of green transition actions? (Select all that apply)

Local government funding programmes/Regional government funding programmes/National government funding programmes/EU funding programmes/Self-funded/Private fundraising and sponsorship/A mix of several funding sources/Others

Part 3 – General ways to greening the cultural and creative sectors

9. In terms of the green transition, which are the most important environmental issues for the CCS? (select up to 3)

Improving energy efficiency/Climate adaptation actions/Increasing recycling/Adopting circular economy principles/Biodiversity improvements/Pollution prevention actions

10. From your perspective, rate the importance of the following measures in accelerating the green transition within the CCS (Very important/Important/Not important)

Implementing renewable energy solutions/Enhancing energy efficiency in building and operations/Promoting sustainable transportation options/Encouraging the use of eco-friendly materials/Organising outreach-engagement projects on the green transition/Regulation to restrict availability of less sustainable options/Introduction of taxes-charges on less sustainable options

11. What difficulties do you see to stimulate the green transition in the CCS? (select up to 3)

Lack of available funding/Complexity of funding programmes/Funding is only for short-term initiatives with temporary impact/Requirement for investment from within own organisation/Lack of access or priority for cultural institutions in funding schemes/High initial investment costs/Ongoing operational expenses/Return on investment concerns – savings not clear/Regulatory and compliance costs/Cost of training and development for staff/Balancing short-term costs with long-term benefits/Others

Part 4 – Goals and Challenges

12. What are your organisation's plans for integrating sustainability in its work? *

13. What barriers has your organisation faced in implementing green practices into its work? (Select all that apply)

Lack of financial resources – supports/Lack of knowledge and skills/Motivation and competing priorities/Insufficient staff numbers to execute actions/Others

14. What are the major financial challenges for implementing green practices? *(select up to 5)

Lack of available funding/Complexity of funding programmes/Funding is only for short-term initiatives with temporary impact/Lack of access or priority for cultural institutions in funding schemes/High initial investment costs/Ongoing operational expenses/Return on investment concerns – savings not clear/Regulatory and compliance costs/Cost of training and development of staff/Balancing short-term costs with long-term benefits

Part 5 – Good practices

15. Can you describe a successful project or initiative in your field that has contributed to sustainability? (Please, provide a URL)

16. Why do you define this example as good practice? *

17. What enables the transferability of a good practice across the CCS? including between EU Member States (select up to 3)

Simplicity in terms of implementation in different contexts/Supportive regulatory frameworks and policies (national/regional/local)/Availability of funding and financial incentives for implementation/Free of restrictions on rights or licensing/Clear guidelines and best practices documentation/Others

18. How does your organisation monitor and evalute the success of green initiatives? (Select all that apply)

Self-assessment of utility bills/Monitoring changes in relevant in-house data and indicators/Sustainability of the initiative (extension of time, permanence)/Replicability/Reputational acclaim (awards, prizes)/Certification of long-term commitment via Ecolabel-EMAS/Others

19. How have these actions contributed to greening your operation? (Select all that apply)

Reduced energy consumption/Reduced waste generation/Increased awareness of environmental issues/Improved public engagement into greening processes/Mainstreaming of sustainable practices in organising cultural activities/Less impact on biodiversity – restoration of biodiversity/Others

Part 6 – Tools and Data to make informed decisions

Here, 'tool' and 'data' are defined as instruments that provides the user the possibility to work concretely on something, that makes the user do and/or decide. The use of a tool or data ultimately results in concrete outcomes. 'Tools and/or data to make informed decisions' are instruments that help their users:

- to understand the environmental aspects of their actions
- to organise their environmental management
- to develop and implement environmental measures
- to measure the environmental impacts of their actions
- to learn from and to exchange and network with other people and organisations

20. Could you share any effective tool that is relevant for greening the CCS?

Please, describe it, provide the country, the institution in charge (owner), and a link.

21. Who are the users of that tool? (Select all that apply) *

Employees and managers of the cultural-creative institution/Clients/Funding providers, policymakers/Others

22. How does the data generated by the tool enable informed decision-making?

23. Focusing on a specific tool: do you consider CO2 calculators to be effective in guiding actions to reduce carbon footprint?

Very effective/Effective/Not effective/Not familiar with them

24. What is the optimum level at which to develop tools to support the CCS in * the green transition?

Pan-EU/National/Regional or local/Organisational

Part 7 – Communication, cooperation and learning from others on green transition

25. What are the most effective channels for the CCS to share and learn from good practices and examples? (select up to 3)

Online workshops or webinars/In-person training events/Forums and other networking events

Sectoral associations and networks/Social media and podcasts/CCS blogs and websites, online learning platforms, newsletters/Other

26. From the list above, have you participated in any activities on sustainability that have influenced your practices?

Yes (if yes, mention in in the next question)/No

27. Can you share any examples of activities that you have participated in that have influences your practices? Can you share any examples of a successful collaboration between your organisation and other organisations or sectors that supported the green transition?

Part 8 – Mainstreaming the CCS into the European Green Deal

Climate change and environmental degradation present an existential threat to Europe and the world. To address this challenge, the EU published the European Green Deal, a growth strategy to transform the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050; where economic growth is decoupled from resource use; and where no one and no place is left behind.

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green- deal_en

28. Which of the Green Deal key goals are most relevant to your organisation, as an institution within the CCS? (Select a maximum of 3)

Transforming our economy and societies/Making transport sustainable for all/Leading the green industrial revolution/Establishing a clean energy system/Renovating building for greener lifestyles/Working with nature to protect our planet and health/Boosting global climate action

29. Taking into account the goals of the European Green Deal, can you provide an example of good practice within the cultural and creative sectors? Provide a title and a URL for further detail.

30. What are the main barriers to the implementation of this initiative and/or the replication of the project in other CCS fields/subsectors? (Select all that apply)

Lack of support from public institutions/Lack of funding/Shortage of available staff or in-house expertise/Lack of commitment to the program on the part of the entity/Need for more training or capacity-building/Others

31. Could you share examples of how the barriers have been overcome?

32. Any other comments you may want to share?

Thank you for your participation!

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