



Galway Arts Centre Environmental Policy and Action Plan

Adopted by the Board of Directors of Galway Arts Centre on 06 May 2025

General Policy Statement

Galway Arts Centre is committed to environmental responsibility, recognising the critical role that arts and culture play in addressing the climate crisis. In alignment with our core values of Forward Thinking and Collaboration, we strive to integrate environmental considerations into all aspects of our operations and programming.

A key example of our commitment is "The Air We Share," a climate action project launched in July 2024. This initiative brings together artists, scientists, and community members to explore air quality and pollution through artistic interventions, citizen science, and community engagement. Another example is a programme of artists bursaries developed to support artists working in the area of environmental research and practice in partnership with Galway Culture Company in 2024. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, we aim to inspire innovative solutions and cultivate a culture of environmental stewardship within our community.

Through these initiatives, Galway Arts Centre, including core programmes of curated exhibitions, Cúirt International Festival of Literature, Galway Youth Theatre and Red Bird Youth Collective, aims to demonstrate how the arts can be a powerful catalyst for environmental change and sustainability.

Galway Arts Centre's Green Team (with a representative from each department) will be established in 2025 and meet once per quarter to review progress and discuss new targets for the year ahead.

Galway Arts Centre will comply fully with environmental legislation. Our commitments under The Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP21) and the subsequent Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23), has enabled Galway Arts Centre to create a Climate Action Plan that aligns with public sector targets which are to improve energy efficiency by 50% over the 2009 baseline and to reduce CO2 emissions by 51% over their 2016-2018 average baseline.

About Galway Arts Centre

Galway Arts Centre's mission is to collaborate with artists to create, challenge, and connect audiences to exceptional local, national, and international art that inspires new ideas and perspectives on our world.

Galway Arts Centre aims to do this by:

- Providing support and opportunities for artists to live and work within the community.
- Engaging audiences and participants in quality contemporary arts through diverse programs, and developing and strengthening the arts community.
- Establishing an effective, sustainable, and resilient organisation.

These aims are guided by core values: Freedom to Imagine, Forward Thinking, Collaboration, Inclusivity, and Integrity.

Since its founding in 1985, Galway Arts Centre has been a pivotal resource for Galway's artistic community, acting as a connector, incubator, and supporter of numerous notable arts organisations in the region.

Galway Arts Centre operates two historic venues; 47 Dominick Street Lower and Nuns Island theatre. 47 Dominick Street Lower is home to the offices of Galway Arts Centre, which includes Galway Youth Theatre and Cúirt International Festival of Literature along with two floors of galleries, a small artist residency studio and a youth arts workshop for the Red Bird Youth Art Collective.

Galway Arts Centre employs 45 personnel on full-time, part-time and freelance basis. In our galleries we host 6-8 contemporary art exhibitions per year. We support weekly workshops with 60+ young people across our youth programmes of Galway Youth Theatre and Red Bird Youth Collective. We run a diverse programme of events, performances and discussions spanning music, theatre, dance, literature and visual art in our 82 seat Nuns Island Theatre. Our literature festival, Cúirt International Festival of Literature, spans across multiple performance venues across Galway City for five-days annually.

Our annual audience figures across all strands of programme are 25,000+

www.galwayartscentre.ie

Organisational Arrangements

This section sets out the responsibilities within Galway Arts Centre, at all levels.

The Board of Directors

The board of directors has ultimate responsibility for Galway Arts Centre's Environmental Policy and Action Plan. As a charity, the position of the Directors at Galway Arts Centre is voluntary and non-executive, and the operational responsibility for being green is devolved to the paid staff (Director and General Manager). One director is nominated to oversee board responsibility for its Environmental Policy and Action Plan.

Directors approve the Environmental Policy and Action Plan and monitor its implementation. Progress against the action plan will be formally reviewed by the board on an annual basis.

Management

The Director holds overall responsibility for Galway Arts Centre's Environmental Policy and Action Plan. The General Manager is the person with responsibility for compliance with Galway Arts Centre's Environmental Policy and Action Plan. The following staff members are responsible for their areas and report on environmental policy implementation directly to the General Manager as lead of the Green Committee.

- Front of House Manager
- Assistant Curator
- Festival Director of Cúirt International Festival of Literature
- Director of Galway Youth Theatre
- Programme Coordinator of Red Bird Youth Collective

Staff

The Environmental Policy and Action Plan are held in the company's google drive policy folder. A summary is included in the Employee Handbook that is sent to each new member of staff. The induction process includes an introduction to Galway Arts Centre's Environmental Policy and Action Plan in general, and areas that relate directly to the staff member in particular. Staff are kept informed of green initiatives and given the formal opportunity to raise green ideas at green team committee meetings.

Green matters are overseen by the green team that consists of representatives from each of Galway Arts Centre's departments. The committee is chaired by the General Manager and meets once per quarter. Minutes of the meetings are sent to all staff and to the board director with responsibility for environmental matters.

The Environmental Policy and Action Plan is available for the public to view on the website www.galwayartscentre.ie

Environmental Ambition

Galway Arts Centre will establish a process for monitoring and reporting, to ensure there is an annual review of carbon emissions, as well as to track progress towards achieving carbon reduction goals. This action plan will be updated upon completion of our carbon footprint analysis. This will include calculating emissions from all organisational activities such as energy consumption, transportation, water usage, waste management and print.

This, in conjunction with forthcoming planned building improvements, will position Galway Arts Centre towards achieving a significant reduction of emissions target over the next five years.

Environmental Commitments

Galway Arts Centre has three overarching commitments as part of the organisation's three year environmental action plan 2025 to 2027.

1. **Reduce Environmental Impact:** We aim to minimize our environmental impact by implementing energy-efficient practices, minimizing unnecessary travel, promoting sustainable transportation options and environmentally responsible delivery of events.
2. **Promote resource efficiency:** We are adopting resource-saving practices in our operations, such as recycling, waste reduction, and responsible consumption of materials in the delivery of our programmes.
3. **Advocacy, education and collaborative initiatives:** We will incorporate environmental considerations into our exhibition, theatre, literature, youth and partnership programmes, raising awareness among artists, participants and audiences, and advocating for sustainable behaviours.

Environmental Targets

The nine targets identified as part of the development of Galway Arts Centre's Environmental Policy and Action Plan include:

1. **Energy Efficiency:** By 2030, Galway Arts Centre aims to improve energy efficiency by 50% (2009 baseline) and to reduce CO2 emissions by 51% (2018 baseline) in line with public sector targets by encouraging energy-efficient practices, investing in more energy-efficient hardware across operations, and working with Galway City Council to switch to energy efficient heating and LED lighting in both venues.
2. **Sustainable Transportation:** Develop and implement a sustainable touring and travel policy that prioritises low-emission transport.

3. **Biodiversity and Land Use:** Ensure that all outdoor performances and installations are environmentally responsible, leaving no long-term negative impact on local ecosystems, and a commitment to ‘greening’ the outdoor areas that we manage.
4. **Waste Reduction and Recycling:** Implement a waste management plan to reduce waste generation and increase recycling rates.
5. **Printing:** Include environmental considerations when designing and printing promotional items, aiming to reduce paper use by 25%, source 100% sustainable materials, and recycle 100% of print products by 2027 (baseline 2024).
6. **Materials for Exhibitions and Staging:** Apply the principles in ‘The Theatre Green Book’ prioritising reused, remodelled and recycled materials and being mindful of ‘good’ new materials versus ‘bad’ new materials where necessary, borrowing or sharing resources where possible.
7. **Advocacy and Education:** Actively promote environmental awareness through our artistic programmes, engaging audiences and communities in conversations about sustainability and climate action.
8. **Collaborative Initiatives:** Partnering with local authorities, educational institutions, and other arts organisations to develop projects that creatively address environmental challenges.
9. **Accountability and Continuous Improvement:** Regularly assess and report on our environmental impact and progress across our programmes including visual art, Nuns Island Theatre, Cúirt International Festival of Literature, Galway Youth Theatre and Red Bird Youth Collective.

Review Process

Galway Arts Centre’s Green Team is responsible for the implementation of this policy and action plan, reviewing quarterly to track progress against targeted improvements and formally reviewed annually.

The current lead of Galway Arts Centre’s Green Team is General Manager, Tara O’Connor.

Galway Arts Centre will internally advocate for cultural shifts in our organisation, prioritising sustainability in decision-making.

Galway Arts Centre Environmental Action Plan 2025-2027

Reducing Environmental Impact: We aim to minimize our environmental impact by implementing energy-efficient practices, minimizing unnecessary travel, promoting sustainable transportation options and environmentally responsible delivery of events.

Object / Targets	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1 (2025)	Measures implemented in Year 2 (2026)	Measures implemented in Year 3 (2027)	Financial Considerations	Lead
Energy Efficiency	By 2030, Galway Arts Centre aims to improve energy efficiency by 50% as compared to 2009, and to reduce CO2 emissions by 51% as compared to 2018, in line with public sector targets. This will be achieved by encouraging energy-efficient practices among the team, artists, participants and audiences, investing in more energy-efficient and robust hardware across operations, and working with Galway City Council to switch to energy efficient heating and LED lighting in both venues.	<p>An energy audit of 47 Dominick Street Lower will be conducted by Galway City Council as part of a wider conservation study.</p> <p>Regularly undertake a procurement process for energy provision to ensure the selection of the most environmentally sustainable options, including suppliers that support smart meter integration.</p> <p>Measures will include switching off lights, monitors and other electronic equipment when not in use, evenings and weekends.</p> <p>All staff members will identify methods of energy reduction within the scope of their role.</p> <p>Energy consumption will be recorded and monitored to track consumption.</p>	<p>Seek funding to upgrade to LED lighting and energy-efficient heating/cooling systems.</p> <p>Optimize digital storage and reduce unnecessary data consumption.</p>	60% of lighting stock and equipment in Nuns Island Theatre is currently energy efficient LED and redevelopment works due to begin in September 2025 will result in an energy efficient building with 100% LED lighting.	<p>THRIVE 1 funding secured by local authority to conduct energy audit as part of conservation study.</p> <p>Grant funding required to upgrade to 100% LED lighting and energy efficient systems.</p> <p>THRIVE 2 funding secured by local authority for Nuns Island redevelopment.</p>	Green Committee

Reducing Environmental Impact: We aim to minimize our environmental impact by implementing energy-efficient practices, minimizing unnecessary travel, promoting sustainable transportation options and environmentally responsible delivery of events.

Object / Targets	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1 (2025)	Measures implemented in Year 2 (2026)	Measures implemented in Year 3 (2027)	Financial Considerations	Lead
Sustainable Transportation	Galway Arts Centre will develop a sustainable touring and travel policy that prioritises low-emission transport and implement it by 2026 to encourage staff, artists, authors, participants, performers and audiences to walk, cycle or use public transport where possible.	<p>Develop a sustainable touring policy for the company encouraging: walking, cycling, public transport and carpooling locally; public transport nationally; and rail and road over flights where possible.</p> <p>Public Transport will be used by staff and participants if travel is necessary to events outside of Galway.</p> <p>Conduct surveys of staff, artists, authors, members and participants to ascertain the carbon footprint of travel.</p>	<p>Expand audience data collection to include transport methods.</p> <p>Cúirt will collaborate with other organisations on overseas author visits to share the carbon footprint where possible.</p> <p>Sustainability will be factored in when transporting artwork for exhibitions.</p>	Galway Arts Centre will continue to encourage visiting artists, authors, theatre practitioners and companies to use more sustainable transport methods when working with the organisation.	n/a	Green Committee and Programme leads: visual art, Cúirt, GYT and Red Bird
Biodiversity and Land Use	Ensure that all outdoor performances and installations are environmentally responsible, leaving no long-term negative impact on local ecosystems, and a commitment to 'greening' the outdoor areas that we manage.	<p>"Greening" at Nuns Island includes use of native and perennial plants, scattering wildflower seed, pollinator friendly bedding in plant containers and window boxes, avoiding invasive species and use of pesticides and chemicals.</p> <p>Ensure that site-specific installations or outdoor performances do not disrupt local ecosystems and are managed sustainably.</p>	Ensure that landscaping plans for Nuns Island redevelopment incorporate 'greening' in terms of plant species and pollinator friendly planting.	Provide diverse green spaces at Nuns Island Theatre following the redevelopment of the venue.	THRIVE 2 funding secured by local authority for Nuns Island redevelopment	Green Committee

Promoting resource efficiency: We are adopting resource-saving practices in our operations, such as recycling, waste reduction, and responsible consumption of materials in the delivery of our artistic programmes.

	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1	Measures implemented in Year 2	Measures implemented in Year 3	Financial Considerations	Lead
Waste Reduction and Recycling	Galway Arts Centre will implement a waste management plan to reduce waste generation and increase recycling rates.	<p>Provide facilities to recycle paper, cardboard, glass, aluminium cans, food and batteries.</p> <p>Waste is minimised by only ordering what is required.</p> <p>Monitor water usage and display signage to encourage water-saving practices.</p> <p>Reduce the use of single use plastic in greenrooms.</p> <p>Implement a system of waste tracking by type and location.</p> <p>Create waste reduction guidelines for external groups and users of venues.</p>	<p>Ensure use of water-based, non-toxic paints, adhesives, and cleaning products where possible.</p> <p>Establish proper disposal programs for hazardous materials.</p>	Commit to reusing, repurposing, or donating at least 80% of set designs and exhibition materials.	n/a	Green Committee
Printing	Galway Arts Centre will include environmental considerations when designing and printing promotional items, aiming to reduce paper use by 25%, source 100% sustainable materials, and recycle 100% of print products	<p>Printed programmes and posters are only used when needed. Reusable pop-ups are purchased when necessary to reduce single-use waste, and lanyards are reused.</p> <p>Only recycled printing paper is purchased and all print cartridges are recycled.</p>	.	<p>We will replace our printers with energy-efficient models.</p> <p>Galway Arts Centre will source and recycle 100% eco-friendly print products used in our buildings.</p>	Costs to replace printers with energy efficient models.	Green Committee and Programme leads: visual art, Cúirt, GYT and Red Bird

Promoting resource efficiency: We are adopting resource-saving practices in our operations, such as recycling, waste reduction, and responsible consumption of materials in the delivery of our artistic programmes.

	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1	Measures implemented in Year 2	Measures implemented in Year 3	Financial Considerations	Lead
	by 2027 (baseline 2024).	<p>Internal printing is kept to a minimum and printers are pre-set to print double-sided B&W. Internal documents are circulated digitally where possible.</p> <p>Galway Youth Theatre has reduced printing of scripts by 50% for workshops and printed texts are shared and reused.</p> <p>Digital methods are used where possible including newsletters and ticketing.</p> <p>Track print generation across programmes to benchmark reduction in usage.</p>				
Materials for Exhibitions and Staging	Galway Arts Centre will apply the principles in 'The Theatre Green Book' prioritising reused, remodelled and recycled materials and being mindful of 'good' new materials versus 'bad' new materials where necessary, borrowing or sharing resources where possible.	<p>Environmental considerations will be an awarding criteria for all procurement across the company.</p> <p>Prioritise purchasing furniture from charity shops and furniture warehouses.</p> <p>Galway Arts Centre has access to storage space next door with Áras na nGael enabling the purchase of</p>	<p>Use sustainable venues and practices for any large-scale off-site events.</p> <p>Research and partner with local sustainable suppliers for catering and event needs.</p> <p>Use eco-friendly, non-toxic, and ethically sourced art materials.</p>	<p>Ensure all exhibitions and performances follow a "zero-waste" policy.</p> <p>Ensure at least 50% of materials used in productions and exhibitions come from sustainable, recycled or reclaimed sources by 2027.</p>	Impact on procurement of prioritising sustainability rather than cost only.	Programme leads: visual art, Cúirt, GYT and Red Bird

Promoting resource efficiency: We are adopting resource-saving practices in our operations, such as recycling, waste reduction, and responsible consumption of materials in the delivery of our artistic programmes.

	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1	Measures implemented in Year 2	Measures implemented in Year 3	Financial Considerations	Lead
		<p>reusable materials and furniture.</p> <p>Galway Youth Theatre has access to a large stock of costumes stored at the O'Donoghue Centre in the University of Galway</p> <p>Since 2021, Galway Youth Theatre has had access to Decadent Theatre's store, which allows for salvaging set floors, backdrops, flats and materials meaning over 60% of materials used in set construction comes from recycled/repurposed materials.</p>				

Advocacy, education and collaborative initiatives: We will incorporate environmental considerations into our exhibition, theatre, literature, youth and partnership programmes, raising awareness among artists, participants and audiences, and advocating for sustainable behaviours.

	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1	Measures implemented in Year 2	Measures implemented in Year 3	Financial Considerations	Lead
Advocacy and Education	We will actively promote environmental awareness through our artistic programmes, engaging audiences and communities in conversations about sustainability and	<p>Integrate themes of environmental responsibility into artistic programming and audience engagement through its exhibition, literature, theatre and youth programmes.</p> <p>Galway Youth Theatre</p>	<p>The curated visual art programme will continue to support, develop and programme artists that seek to raise awareness on environmental concerns.</p> <p>Galway Youth Theatre will</p>	Red Bird Youth Collective will focus on environmental concerns as part of their 2026 / 2027 Young Ensemble Scheme funded project.	n/a	Programme leads: visual art, Cúirt, GYT and Red Bird

Advocacy, education and collaborative initiatives: We will incorporate environmental considerations into our exhibition, theatre, literature, youth and partnership programmes, raising awareness among artists, participants and audiences, and advocating for sustainable behaviours.

	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1	Measures implemented in Year 2	Measures implemented in Year 3	Financial Considerations	Lead
	climate action.	members are examining 'Lungs' by Duncan McMillan and 'If There is I haven't Found It Yet' By Nick Payne	workshop plays that place climate change and sustainability as a central part of their narrative. Our Changing World will be the key theme for Cúirt 2026/2027 examining various connections and interactions through cross-genre conversations on topics including the environment/climate change with Omar El Akkad, John Lanchester.			
Collaborative Initiatives	We will partner with local authorities, educational institutions, and other arts organisations to develop projects that creatively address environmental challenges.	Galway Arts Centre is a partner in "The Air We Share", a climate action project that brings together artists, scientists, and community members to explore air quality and pollution through artistic interventions, citizen science, and community engagement, culminating in an exhibition in Galway Arts Centre in September 2025.	Galway Youth Theatre will collaborate with environmental organisations to develop educational resources and encourage participants to engage in environmental projects and initiatives.		n/a	Programme leads: visual art, Cúirt, GYT and Red Bird

Advocacy, education and collaborative initiatives: We will incorporate environmental considerations into our exhibition, theatre, literature, youth and partnership programmes, raising awareness among artists, participants and audiences, and advocating for sustainable behaviours.

	Actions	Measures implemented in Year 1	Measures implemented in Year 2	Measures implemented in Year 3	Financial Considerations	Lead
Accountability and Continuous Improvement	Galway Arts Centre will regularly assess and report on our environmental impact and progress across our programmes including visual art, Nuns Island Theatre, Cúirt International Festival of Literature, Galway Youth Theatre and Red Bird Youth Collective.	Galway Arts Centre will internally advocate for cultural shifts in our organisation, prioritising sustainability in decision-making. Establish a green committee to oversee environmental initiatives. Ascertain a baseline of energy consumption, carbon footprint of travel, print generation and water usage to determine a benchmark for tracking.	Conduct annual sustainability audits to track progress and identify areas for improvement.		n/a	Green Committee