

Press release

New initiatives to drive climate action in the cultural sector

From [Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media](#)

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Minister Martin announces new funding and plan to support cultural organisations to reduce carbon emissions

Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, has today set out her vision for the cultural sector to become a leader on climate action in Ireland. At the core of this vision will be the preparation of a new national policy framework on culture, creativity and climate action.

The new policy marks a world first in bringing together national climate and cultural policy. It will set out the key ways in which cultural organisations can play their part in combatting climate change in the context of the national carbon emissions reduction targets. Actions will include initiatives to support cultural organisations in auditing and reducing their energy use, improvements to building infrastructure, programmes that engage audiences in climate action as well as guidance on how to embed energy and waste reduction considerations into all aspects of cultural programming and operations. A key pillar of the framework will be the Arts Council's forthcoming Climate Action Policy, which will provide climate action resources for arts workers and organisations, including training, funding and other supports.

The consultation phase for the framework was launched by the Minister at an event on 14 June at Dunamais Arts Centre, a historic cultural space recently upgraded to a B1 energy rating. The event featured participation from cultural leaders with experience in reducing energy use who shared insights into how the sector can meet the urgent challenges of the climate emergency. Participants included the National Cultural Institutions, the Arts Council, local authority representatives as well as the Sustainable

Energy Authority of Ireland. The day also marks the launch of a survey on the role of culture in delivering climate action, ensuring that a diversity of views are incorporated into the final policy framework.

Minister Martin's roadmap includes a new capital funding scheme which will make available €1.4 million to support not-for-profit cultural organisations with the cost of reducing their carbon footprint, improving accessibility and providing additional workspaces for artists. This new capital investment scheme will provide immediate supports for all eligible arts and cultural centres across the country to enhance their energy efficiency and sustainability measures.

Speaking today, Minister Martin said:

"Culture is a powerful force in engaging the public and I want to support the sector in inspiring Irish people to address the climate crisis. I believe that cultural organisations can lead the way, by reducing their emissions and embedding climate considerations in all aspects of their operations. That is why I continue to introduce new investment schemes to support the transition of cultural organisations to new, more sustainable operations. It is vital that we hear more from the sector about their needs when it comes to climate change, so I am looking forward greatly to working with stakeholders during the consultation phase for this new policy."

Notes

Progress to date

The department is supporting several initiatives in this area given the increasing need for action across the culture and creative sectors:

- the National Cultural Institution Capital Programme, including those projects under the National Development Plan, have been aligned with the objectives of the climate action plan. This includes prioritising sustainability as a key consideration in project appraisal and delivery

- the development of Stream E, a new strand of climate supportive funding within the regional cultural infrastructure programme
- Creative Ireland's delivery of climate action supportive initiatives under the Sustainability and Wellbeing pillar, including the Creative Climate Action Fund
- Culture Ireland's enhanced consideration of sustainability within its programme delivery model
- the Arts Council's development of a sectoral climate action policy which will, once finalised, deliver a range of actions in line with the Climate Action Plan emissions reduction targets and public sector roadmap. It is envisaged that this policy, once finalised will, represent a key pillar of action within the National Policy Framework

National Policy Framework on Culture, Climate and Creativity

There is a growing recognition of the role of culture in creating a vision for the future and in inspiring creative solutions to the climate emergency. Despite this, there currently exists no national policy that explicitly defines the role of the culture and creative sectors in the effort to combat climate change. The development of a National Policy Framework on Culture, Creativity and Climate Policy represents a world first in bringing together these policy areas, continuing Ireland's leadership in national policy and legislation for climate action.

The National Policy Framework will provide a responsive framework for action across the culture and creative sectors, taking into account progress to date as well as sectoral ambitions and requirements. To support its development, the department has undertaken an international literature and policy review in this area, engaging in initial internal and external stakeholder consultation. This research base and engagement has suggested that the creation of the national policy framework will:

1. Encourage the cultural sector to take climate action
2. Provide guidance and support to the sector on climate action
3. Provide a structure that enables coordination, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral climate action
4. Embed climate considerations within sectoral decision-making
5. Utilise the unique qualities of culture in the effort to combat climate change

6. Reduce the emissions of the culture sector in support of national targets

It is proposed to structure the policy framework under three key headings of embedding, engaging and enhancing, which were identified on the basis of the common themes identified in the international literature review. These themes would each be supported by a set of policy objectives and actions, to be determined following sectoral and public consultation.

Theme	Goal	Area for action	
Embedding	Ensuring that concepts of climate action and environmental sustainability are at the core of organisational policy frameworks, strategies, schemes, practices and activities.	Corporate Governance. Linking performance and funding	
Engaging	Harnessing the power of culture and creativity to provide a vision for the future.	Create new narratives to communicate the challenges and impacts of climate change. Support practitioners to reach and connect with diverse audiences. Encourage creative engagement with and solutions to environmental issues.	Creative Ireland Culture Ireland National Cultural Institutions The Arts Council

Enhancing	Empowering the culture and creative sector to reduce emissions and enhancing cultural infrastructure in line with key spatial policies, including the National Development Plan and the National Planning Framework.	Supporting the sector in the just transition to a low carbon economy. Department capital funding schemes. Leveraging other public sector funding
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Sectoral survey

On 14 June the department launched a survey on culture and climate action aimed at cultural organisations across the country. It is anticipated that the survey results will provide critical insights into organisations' climate awareness, activities to date in this area as well as resource and training requirements. The outcome of the survey will directly inform the development of the policy framework, actions and implementation plan.

Cultural Capital Scheme

The Cultural Capital Scheme was originally launched in October 2019, with a total fund of €4.7 million. Some €1.4 million is now being made available under 'Stream E' of the scheme. In line with the government's action on climate change, this scheme will provide funding for projects that reduce an organisation's carbon footprint and will, for the first time, include funding for organisational energy audits. Projects that provide additional capacity for artists and artistic production, as well as those that address access issues, will also be supported. Examples of what will be funded, include:

- refurbishment and upgrading of facilities
- energy audits

- projects that reduce the organisation's carbon footprint including energy upgrade projects, for example: insulation, solar panels, LED lighting
- projects that address access, including accessibility audits
- health and safety upgrades

Up to 150 arts and cultural organisations will be eligible to apply for the scheme. Grants of up to €50,000 will be available to not-for-profit organisations with a defined arts & culture remit. Grants will be offered for eligible projects, as follows:

- grants up to €20,000 at a grant funding rate of 85% (60% for Local Authority owned facilities)
- grants up to €50,000 at a grant funding rate of 70% (60% for Local Authority owned facilities)

This will be a rolling scheme, that is, there will be no closing date, and will remain open until the fund is exhausted. The scheme's guidelines, together with application form and frequently asked questions, will be available on the department's website from 14 June 2023 at the following link: [gov.ie - Creative Arts: Grants and Funding \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/46f4f-creative-arts-grants-and-funding/).
(<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/46f4f-creative-arts-grants-and-funding/>).

Minister Martin will announce specific capital funding schemes for artists' workspaces and climate adaptation in due course.

Part of

Policies

[Climate Action and Environment \(/en/policy/d7a12b-climate-action-and-environment/\)](/en/policy/d7a12b-climate-action-and-environment/).

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