



**We take care
of the cultural
ecosystem**



Culture Action Europe

Sustainability Policy

Culture Action Europe together with 15 other European cultural networks launched the SHIFT eco-certification pilot phase. The aim of this process is to co-develop a bespoke eco-certification for cultural networks, taking into account their specific needs and working methods.

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Outline





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- Policy:** This policy seeks to ensure that Culture Action Europe operates in an environmentally sustainable way in all that it does, setting measurable goals and acting as a model of good practice within the European cultural sector.
- Purpose:** Its purpose is to define how Culture Action Europe promote sustainability through our programmes, events, and policy advocacy and to guide how we will operate in an environmentally sustainable way.
- Scope:** This policy applies to all of Culture Action Europe's work. It covers organisational operations (such as purchasing and utilities), digital practices, travel, and event organisation with partners, as well as our external communications and advocacy.
- Governance:** This policy will be reviewed every two years, is overseen by Culture Action Europe's Board, and will be implemented through the associated Sustainability Action Plan, managed by Culture Action Europe's Green Team.
- Responsibilities:** All staff, freelancers and volunteers are required to ensure that in any activities they undertake or projects they manage or co-manage as part of their duties, they apply this policy in both letter and spirit. Culture Action Europe will provide training and resources to empower them to integrate sustainable practices effectively. Board members are encouraged to ensure that their decisions and the work of Culture Action Europe align with this policy and demonstrate leadership by example. All new team members are required to undergo a SHIFT onboarding session as part of their onboarding, complemented by regular refreshers to keep staff up to date with CAE's sustainability commitments.





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Our Environmental Sustainability Approach

Culture Action Europe acknowledges the connection between human activity and the climate crisis and commits to minimising its ecological footprint, implementing sustainable practices, and setting an example of responsible environmental action for our members and other cultural networks. Our focus is on environmental sustainability, which invariably has strong connections with social sustainability and to a lesser extent, economic sustainability. We also recognise that adapting to the climate crisis requires more than technical solutions: it demands a cultural shift in how we think, work, and collaborate. Culture Action Europe is committed to championing this shift and to supporting our members and partners in embedding sustainability into their practices and narratives.

Our approach is aligned with the SHIFT eco-certification process, which we are co-developing with other cultural networks to address the specific needs of our field. These connections ensure that our commitments strengthen and reflect wider European efforts while remaining relevant to the cultural sector.

We are committed to upholding high standards of environmental sustainability in all areas of our work, both internally and in collaboration with partners. This policy applies to all staff, freelancers, and volunteers, and is fully endorsed by the Board. The key areas of action are outlined below:

Our Policy Actions

Governance

- Overall responsibility for implementing this policy lies with Culture Action Europe's Secretary General and the Green Team, who will review it on a bi-annual basis.
- To ensure that we are meeting the aims and the spirit of this policy we will:





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- o Discuss and review how well we are implementing this policy, and adjust our practices and action plan where necessary
 - o Assess any significant new or revised policies and procedures for their impact on environmental sustainability
 - o Embed environmental sustainability into our work plans
 - o Ensure our employment practices and procedures are consistent with the aims of this policy.
- All staff and Board members are encouraged to embed the principles of this policy in their daily work and are encouraged to contribute ideas for strengthening our sustainability practices. We are committed to making this policy accessible, understandable and meaningful for staff, suppliers, and partners, so that sustainability becomes a shared practice across all our collaborations.

Our Impact

We seek to raise awareness of the urgent need for a cultural shift as the foundation for building a just, fair, and equitable society. Central to this commitment is also recognising our environmental impact and taking responsibility for minimising our footprint. To achieve this, this policy commits to identifying and reducing emissions in our operations in the following areas:

Travel

- Record and report all work related travel, with staff contributing by logging their journeys so emissions can be tracked collectively.
- Integrate environmental sustainability principles into our [travel policy](#).
- Reduce reliance on carbon-intensive transport, such as flights, wherever possible.
- Provide additional budget and time, within reasonable financial and operational limits, to support team members or invited speakers who choose lower impact travel options.
- Apply a fairness lens, recognising that in some cases air travel is necessary for invited speakers and contributors to participate equitably.





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Communication and Raising Awareness

- Commit to developing actions that raise awareness of environmental issues.
- Use our role and multiplier effect to inspire and empower members, partners, and the wider cultural ecosystem to engage with sustainability.
- Prioritise clarity, accessibility, and responsibility in our communications.
- Reduce unnecessary duplication of materials and resources, favour digital over print where appropriate.
- Ensure that our messages support inclusive and sustainable narratives.

Utilities

- Minimise energy and utility use in our operations, wherever possible.
- Ensure offices and equipment are managed to avoid unnecessary energy use, with staff contributing to responsible practices.

Digital Realm

- Regularly review and remove unnecessary files, emails, and folders from shared drives, cloud storage, and mail servers to minimise digital clutter and reduce associated energy consumption.
- Avoid duplicating large files across multiple platforms; instead, use efficient file-sharing practices and centralised storage solutions.
- Optimise the use of digital tools by setting clear retention policies and encouraging thoughtful data management across the organisation.
- Use artificial intelligence tools responsibly, being mindful of their significant energy demands; prioritise lightweight, efficient applications and ensure AI use adds clear value to our work.

Waste

- Minimise the use of printed materials in our operations.
- Use the waste recycling facilities in the office.
- ✶ Encourage staff and participants at our events to use recycling facilities.
- ✶ Avoid the use of single-use disposable items at events and meetings wherever possible.





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Procurement

- All event agreements and contracts with co-organisers include a clause on environmental sustainability, covering waste reduction, travel choices, and responsible resource use.
- Suppliers and partners are encouraged to follow the same principles.
- When choosing suppliers or partners, we consider their sustainability policies alongside other important factors such as social benefit and enabling participation by those who may not have the resources for formal eco-labels.

Created By:	Culture Action Europe team	Date created: 14.07.2023
Effective Date:	Reviewed By: CAE Executive Committee	Date Reviewed: 6.10.2023
	Approved By: CAE Executive Committee	Date Approved: 6.10.2023

Revision History





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Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
1.0	6.10.2023	Added higher budget and time needed for sustainable travel and the section on awareness raising,	CAE Executive Committee
2.0	07/11/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy scope broadened: now explicitly includes digital practices, external communications, and advocacy in addition to purchasing and events.• Tone updated: shifted from compliance-focused to shared responsibility and empowerment.• Responsibilities expanded: now includes training, resources, and regular refreshers; Board members' leadership role strengthened.• Environmental Sustainability Approach: new emphasis on the need for a cultural shift and alignment with the SHIFT eco-certification process.• Travel: clarified commitments, added provision of time and budget for sustainable travel, and recognition that flights may be necessary for inclusive participation.• Raising Awareness: reframed as a stronger communication and advocacy role for CAE.• Utilities: framed as organisational responsibility with staff contribution (not "last staff member to leave checks equipment").	CAE Green Team 24/11/2025





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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital Realm: new section added to address energy impacts of digital storage, AI and communication.• Procurement: event agreements and contracts must now include a mandatory sustainability clause; decisions balance sustainability with social benefit and inclusivity for partners lacking eco-labels.	
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Date and Place:

24.11.2025. Brussels Belgium

Signed by:

Lars Ebert

Secretary General of Culture Action Europe



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