

# **Glasgow International Environmental Sustainability Statement: November 2023**

Glasgow International acknowledges the scale and urgency of the interconnected environmental crises the world is facing. We recognise that major action is needed across every sector of society, but that contemporary art has a particularly important role to play, not only by reducing its own environmental impact as a sector, but by using arts capacity to communicate, challenge and inspire, as well as its broader cultural influence to encourage wider societal change.

As part of Glasgow Life, Glasgow International works with an organisation wide Environmental Policy which can be read [here](#).

Glasgow International has committed to reducing carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency across our programmes and activities, with a view to contributing towards the achievement of Glasgow City Council net zero 2030 target date and national target in Scotland of 2045.

Glasgow International will consider and manage the impact of the climate emergency at both structural and operational levels. We recognise that in order to ensure business sustainability, a primary consideration is the scale and focus of the festival. The long-term development of and responsiveness to local relationships will be foregrounded, as budget and resource are rebalanced towards a more collaborative festival model. The festival will adapt, rather than be forced to react: the local vs international binary previously held as integral to Glasgow International will be reframed, taking into account Glasgow's inherent transnationalism.

In addition, Glasgow International places Climate Justice at the core of its work, taking a people-centred approach to climate change and treating it as a social, political and cultural issue as much as a scientific, technical and

economic one. The strategic review of Glasgow International underway since 2021 is built upon a best practice anti-racist and access-led approach which we consider as intersecting with principles of environmental sustainability.

As a non-venue-based festival, the most significant environmental impact of Glasgow International is from activities such as shipping, exhibition production and travel. Compared to other cultural organisations, GI has very low impact in relation to building-based emissions.

In the light of this, GI has developed a list of actions based on strategies of mitigation and adaptation in order to reduce carbon emissions associated with the festival:

- Regularly calculating the carbon footprint of our operations and embedding Carbon Budgeting within our organisational structure and festival development for 2026 and 2028. Within the framework of Carbon Budgeting, the allocation of carbon use will be considered and agreed upon as a team. The Carbon Budget will be considered at all stages of festival planning and held alongside the financial budget. For instance, curatorial and artist travel will be weighed up against other carbon-heavy activities. Carbon Budgeting is being incorporated within particular projects for Glasgow International 2024, with a view to expanding this across festival operations by Glasgow International 2026.
- Reducing staff and artist flights to 50 % of pre-COVID levels by 2026 and a further 25% by 2028
- Ensuring the majority of our international shipping is carried out by sea, rail or road rather than air by 2028
- Providing informational tools around reducing carbon emissions for artists, arts organisations, artist-led spaces and independent curators presenting projects as part of GI 2026 & 2028

- Establishing an environmental sustainability working group with members representing these projects, to co-develop further ideas and practices for reducing carbon emissions across the festival (begun in the build-up to Glasgow International 2024)
- Ensuring all of our packing and exhibition production materials are reusable or curbside recyclable by 2028, as a step towards zero-waste operations within GI-initiated projects by 2030
- Establishing a post-festival materials recycling scheme with Circular Arts Network, to enable building and install materials from across festival projects to be re-used or appropriately disposed of (pilot scheme begun for GI 2024)
- As part of the Green Arts Initiative (GAI), growing our networks and advocacy with other members
- Becoming an Active Member of Gallery Climate Coalition
- The criteria for selection for the Glasgow International Open Programme in 2026 and 2028 will embed a commitment to make this work visible, recognising that many art organisations, individuals and groups in Glasgow already directly addresses the climate crisis and innovate around how art can contribute to environmental sustainability
- In projects initiated by the Glasgow International team for 2026 and 2028, work with co-commissioning partners to ensure artists' work achieves wide visibility through the most efficient use of resources, and organising production residencies for international artists in Scotland to reduce shipping
- Setting budget and time within the Technical Manager's contract for specific pre-festival research on best environmental practice within exhibition making and art production, with a focus on the circular economic model. This will guide decisions made from the earliest

stages of artist commissions and exhibition development and be shared with project organisers in the Open Programme

- Consulting with Open Programme participants in early stages of festival planning to provide support for environmentally sustainable decisions and actions within their Glasgow International project
- Engaging with environmentally responsible suppliers in line with Glasgow Life procurement policies
- Amending the Commissioning Agreements for Glasgow International to include plans for post-exhibition reuse and recycling of exhibition materials
- Supporting staff training in relevant areas, e.g. carbon budgeting, sustainable materials, and climate justice. We will work with partners to ensure best current practice informs this work, including Creative Carbon Scotland
- As part of festival marketing and communications materials, sustainable travel options will be promoted and encouraged.