

GCC 2023

Decarbonisation action plan **For Galleries and Art Sector Businesses**

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- LEARN MORE**
- Gallery Climate Coalition

Gallery Climate Coalition (GCC) first launched in 2020 when a collection of galleries and related professionals – primarily from London’s commercial art sector – came together with the shared goal of halving the sector’s emissions by 2023. Since then, we’ve seen over 1000 members join the coalition, commit to these targets, and start to take effective action to mitigate their environmental impacts.

This Decarbonisation Action Plan brings together the past three years’ worth of learnings and data from across the coalition. It’s a framework designed to empower anyone in the visual arts who is committed to creating an environmentally responsible sector.

This plan builds upon the foundation laid by GCC's 2021 Decarbonisation Action Plan. We recognise the importance of keeping our guidance and information up to date, in line with the latest science, and relevant to our ever-expanding membership. As such, we aim to periodically publish updated versions of these Action Plans.

We know there is still a long way to go, and without the leadership of governments and policies to guide us towards a livable future, it falls to each of us to spearhead change. The good news is that we are already seeing examples of organisations that have made huge strides towards their climate targets as well as witnessing a shift in the sector's general discourse and ways of working. Throughout this plan, we've included case studies that show that the

transformation underway, proving that change isn't only possible, it's already happening.

We welcome feedback and collaboration from our members. Your insights and contributions are invaluable as we strive to improve our strategies and effectiveness. If you have comments, or questions, or wish to be part of shaping future Action Plans, please get in touch.

// We know there is still a long way to go, and without the leadership of governments and policies to guide us towards a livable future, it falls to each of us to spearhead change

How to use this document

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- 🔗 Example link

● **USE THE MENU TO NAVIGATE THE DOCUMENT**

The Action Plan was not intended to be read front to back in a linear sense so we’ve included a navigation menu on the left of each page that will allow you to move between sections. If you ever want to go back to the contents page, simply click on the contents box in the navigation bar.

● **LEARN MORE**

We’ve produced this resource in an attempt to pool the latest knowledge and data and boil it down into a step by step process. Where relevant, we’ve linked to further places and tools that may be useful if you want to dive deeper into a particular area.

This resource aims to provide a step-by-step guide to creating an organisational decarbonisation and waste strategy, so that you can be confident that you are working towards GCC’s targets effectively.

The advice here is generalised, and of course not all of it will be relevant to every type of member. However, our hope is to provide you with a framework for developing your own action plans, collaboratively within your own teams, to ensure that it is reflective of your organisations as well as where you are in your sustainability “journey”.

THE SECTIONS

1: Context summarises the most up-to-date climate science and places the environmental emergency into the context of the visual arts. It also details what GCC’s targets are and why.

2: Decarbonisation Strategy and 3: Waste strategy outline the steps your company can implement to take action on both carbon emissions and waste.

4: Addressing the obstacles and 5: FAQs address the common hurdles many GCC members face and the questions we are often asked. We won’t have the answer for everything, but we hope that by identifying the obstacles, collectively we can seek solutions.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

This Decarbonisation Action Plan focuses on supporting Commercial Galleries & Art Sector Businesses, who make up the majority of GCC’s membership. The decarbonisation & waste strategies have been updated to reflect the specific challenges and opportunities these businesses face.

Earlier in 2023, we published a [Decarbonisation Action Plan for Non-Profits and Institutions](#) that considers the specific issues facing the non-profit sector. If you work for a non-profit, we’d recommend referring to that resource.

We’ve aimed for this Action Plan to act as an entry point for new members, and/or those who might be newer to this conversation – although we hope it will also spark new ideas and insights for those who have been working on environmental responsibility for a while.

We recognise that artists—the fastest growing section of GCC’s membership—face their own unique opportunities, both in decarbonising their own practices as well as supporting the shifts of the wider sector. GCC is working to address this by providing guidance for artists in 2024.

There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to environmental responsibility, and all organisations will face their own unique opportunities, as well as barriers to implementing change. Therefore, not everything in this document will be relevant to everyone, and we expect that this resource will be shared among teams.

Gary Hume,
Artist

// I can't claim to be an environmental activist, I'm more like a 10 percent activist. But I think there are lots of 10 percent activist, and if you put a lot of 10 percents together it starts to add up

The issues we face

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LEARN MORE

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Year on year, it becomes harder to ignore the impacts of the climate crisis. Extreme weather events affected every continent on the planet in 2023, causing devastation to both lives and livelihoods. Reports released earlier this year suggested that the planet is now likely to surpass 1.5 degrees of warming within this decade, which is sooner than had been widely predicted.

In July—the hottest month ever recorded—UN secretary general António Guterres made a stark announcement: the era of global warming has ended, and “the era of global boiling has arrived”. We are at the very edge of planetary breakdown, and the need for urgent action has never been greater.

THE GOOD NEWS

We all have a role to play in this. Across the globe, industries are stepping up, identifying new ways of working, increasing uptake in necessary technologies to support the transition, and questioning the systems and models that have created the crisis we now face.

As well as this, throughout 2023 we’ve seen the impact of ‘positive tipping points’. Reports released this year found that the economics of renewable energy and electric vehicles vs fossil fuels seem to be tipping in the planet’s favour, meaning that a major shift towards a lower-carbon society is perfectly possible between now and 2030 – but only if we all keep pushing hard for it.

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ART SECTOR

Through completion of Carbon Reports using GCC’s free carbon calculator tool, the visual arts industry is building an understanding of our sector’s major sources of emissions, and taking effective action to mitigate them.

Largely, we know what the art world needs to do to meet climate targets: change the ways we ship, upgrade our buildings and regulations to become more energy efficient and reduce our reliance on international travel. In general it means becoming more efficient at what we do, and questioning the long-held habits we’ve become accustomed to.

We also know that art has the potential for a positive impact too, thanks to the sector’s wide platform and influence on public discourse. By showcasing practical climate solutions and spotlighting artworks, voices, and stories that highlight the reality of the climate emergency, the art world can use its powerful and privileged position to help tackle the crisis. However, to do this with credibility we need to show that we are also tackling our own emissions in line with climate science.

Since 2020, over 1,000 GCC members from across the visual arts sector have acknowledged these issues by agreeing to GCC’s targets of halving the sector’s emissions by 50% by 2030 and moving towards near-zero waste.

Whilst there is always more work to be done, it’s clear that change is underway. Throughout this Decarbonisation Action Plan we’ve spotlighted examples of exemplary practice from across the GCC membership, some of whom are on track to surpass their emission reduction targets.

// A major shift towards a lower-carbon society is perfectly possible between now and 2030 – but only if we all keep pushing hard for it.

Targets explained

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- Targets and commitments, Gallery Climate Coalition

THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THE 2030 GOAL

In 2015, 196 governments came together in Paris and signed the Paris Agreement, a legally-binding international treaty on climate change. They pledged to limit global heating to well below 2 degrees, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

In 2018, the climate scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produced a landmark report on what it would take to meet this target and limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. They concluded that the world needed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 45% by 2030, compared with 2010 levels.

WHAT ARE GCC'S CLIMATE TARGETS?

In line with IPCC guidance, we are asking all GCC members to sign up to at least a 50% CO2e emissions reduction by 2030, based on 2018/2019 levels.

A 45% cut from 2010 emission levels equates to roughly a 50% cut from 2018/19 emission levels, which is why the GCC has set a minimum target of 50% emissions reductions for our members by 2030.

However, in consideration of the urgency of the crisis and the slow pace of global progress since 2018, we strongly encourage all our members to go further than this – especially as most of our members are based in countries that bear a higher responsibility for the climate crisis, and so should be reducing their emissions at a faster rate.

We're aware that many of our members are engaging with this issue for the first time, and for them, 50% by 2030 will feel like an achievable starting point. However, as you will see throughout this document, other GCC members have already started taking action, with some already meeting these targets.

The scale of the climate crisis requires an ambitious response. Our hope is that if our more engaged and experienced members declare more ambitious 2030 targets (eg 70-90% emissions reductions), it will encourage the rest of our membership to keep upgrading their targets and move further and faster as new opportunities for decarbonisation become available over the next six years.

● **TARGET 1**

50% **REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS FROM 2019 LEVELS ACROSS SECTOR**

● **TARGET 2**

0 **NEAR-ZERO* WASTE OPERATIONS ACHIEVED BY 2030 WHERE FACILITIES ALLOW**

*Near-zero waste is defined by GCC as 'As close to nothing as possible going to landfill or incinerator, in the regions where facilities permit'.

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Hosfelt Gallery is a commercial gallery based in San Francisco. Founded in 1996, the gallery is now run by a small team from its current space, a former door factory in San Francisco’s arts district.

The Gallery is counted among GCC’s first wave of Active Members, and the team have already made substantial progress on reducing their CO2e emissions since establishing their 2019 baseline.

In the three years since first calculating the gallery’s carbon footprint, the team has reduced their carbon emissions by an impressive 44%, from 93.77 tons of carbon in 2019 to 52.75 tons in 2022. The gallery is aiming to reduce their footprint by 50% by the end of 2023, a full seven years ahead of the 2030 Paris targets.

Collaborating with others and rethinking habits and ways of working have been critical to the team’s reductions so far. This is in both their public-facing work, such as shipping and re-evaluating travel to art fairs, and internally, through initiatives like a staff commuting policy.

In early 2023, Hosfelt collaborated with the Art Dealers Association of America to create a sustainability roadmap for the ADAA’s annual Art Show, and the team have drawn on this work in the running of their own gallery. Reducing international travel to fairs has had a huge impact on reducing their emissions over the past two years.

‘We’ve realised that we don’t have to do that much international travel—we can be more strategic and smart about how we travel, when we travel, and combining multiple things within a given trip,’ says Dianne Dec, Partner and COO/CFO at Hosfelt.

For example, the team have established regular virtual studio visits for non-local curators and collectors and have developed their online programming, which reduces international travel while also maintaining connections with their international audiences. When the team do travel to Europe, such as an annual trip to Düsseldorf with collectors, they strategically combine visits to reduce additional travel for the rest of the year.

When it comes to shipping, the gallery team avoid air freight wherever possible and think carefully about each individual shipment. They also ask shipping companies to provide emissions information with quotes and include shipping-related emissions information on invoices.

‘We think about where each work is coming from, and how we can minimise the shipping—can it travel straight from the artist’s studio, for example, and does that have less of an impact?’ says Dec.

In practice this means thinking about exhibitions 6–8 months out and planning how shipments can be consolidated. ‘The more planning you do, the more effective you can be,’ says Hosfelt.

When thinking about how to make energy and emissions savings, the gallery team draws on the particular benefits of their location. With skylit offices in a city with a temperate climate, the team can go largely without air conditioning or heating systems, and benefit from natural light that reduces the need for electricity. The gallery also takes full advantage of San Francisco’s well-developed infrastructure for recycling and composting.

The gallery’s owners are clear on the importance of culture change and leading by example. Hosfelt and Dec regularly take public transport to work, and have developed a staff policy in which each member of staff gets an extra days’ paid holiday for every thirty days they take public transport to the office. 50% of the gallery staff now use public transport at least three times a week.

‘It’s important to incentivise people, and make climate action seem like a cultural priority,’ says Hosfelt.

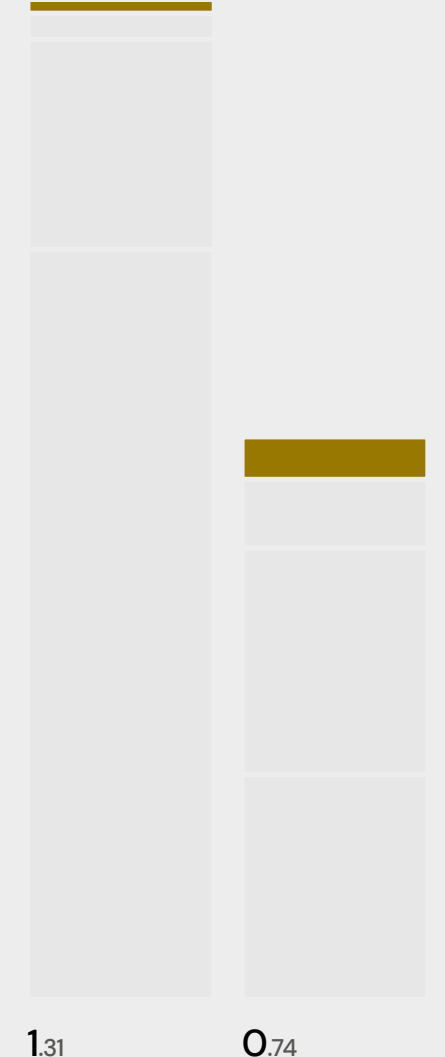
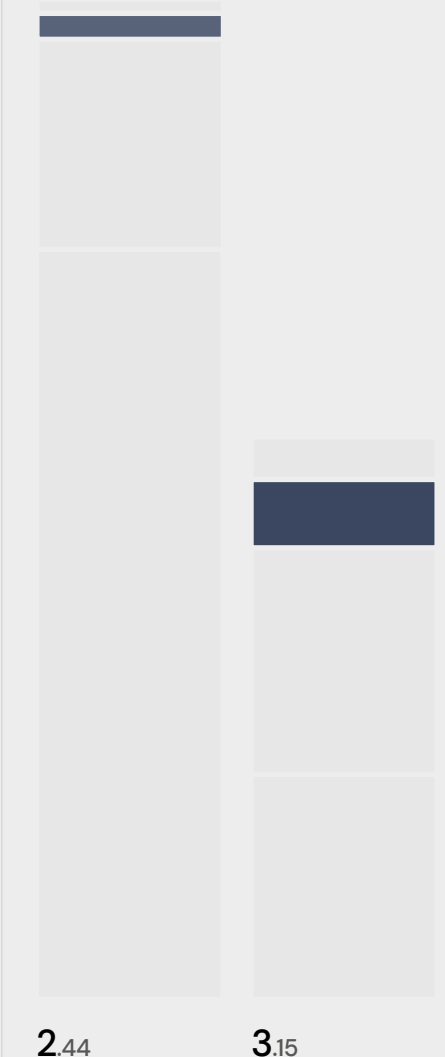
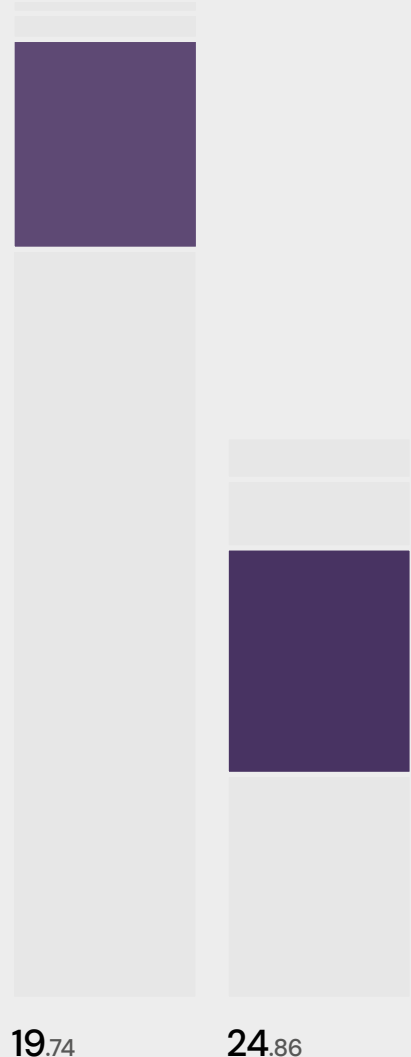
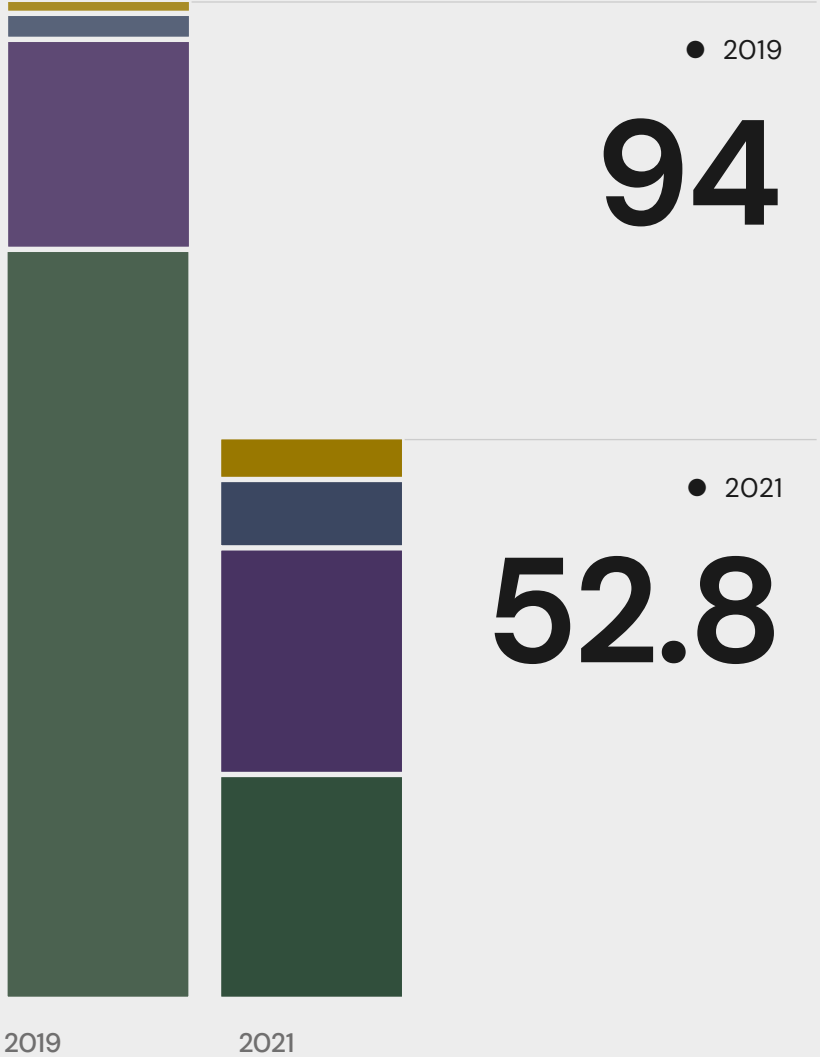
Thinking carefully and specifically about reducing emissions over the past three years has meant that climate action is now embedded into the gallery’s operations, clearing the path for the future reductions they need to make to reach their target.

Hosfelt Gallery

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● **CARBON EMISSIONS 2019 vs 2021**
TCO₂e



TOTAL 43% ↓

TRAVEL
(FLIGHTS) 65% ↓

SHIPPING
(AIR FREIGHT) 26% ↑

ENERGY 29% ↑

OTHER 13% ↓

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We need to take urgent action.

The following pages contain a 5–step decarbonisation strategy that has been developed by GCC. This has been designed for those who are unsure where and how to take the first step. As with any initiative, getting started is often the hardest part. But with the climate crisis unfolding around us, we don’t have time to delay.

Even for those who may be deeper into this journey, we hope the advice in this section will spark some new ideas, as well as offering support if you are facing barriers to implementation.

Of course, decarbonisation isn’t the whole story. The climate crisis is only one of a number of interlinked environmental crises we are facing, such as biodiversity loss and the buildup of plastics and other toxins in our air, land and water. But taking action on the climate crisis (and aiming for zero waste operations) should, if done properly, help make progress in these other areas too, while tackling the most urgent issue we all currently face.

Therefore, GCC’s position is that the urgency and immediacy of the climate crisis makes it our primary focus when helping arts organisations develop environmental action plans. However, it’s important not to forget the other interrelated crises that are facing our society and the living planet. See [Waste strategy](#) for more advice on moving towards a circular economy to transform our relationship with waste. We hope to do further work on how the visual arts can better support the solutions to the other environmental crises we face, from boosting biodiversity in outdoor arts spaces to reducing the toxins in art materials.

As always, GCC is here to help. If you have questions or concerns, or would like to share examples of positive action you’ve been taking, we are always happy to hear from you.

// Getting started is the hardest part, but we don't have time to delay

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Establishing an internal team dedicated to environmental responsibility will embed a strong culture of sustainability within your organisation. This is a key step in normalising environmental considerations at all stages of decision-making.

Depending on the scale, complexity and structure of your organisation, the shape and size of your Green Team will vary. Below are some key things to consider.

Green Teams should have input from all parts of the organisation, including individuals who hold key decision-making powers.

This may include: a Registrar, Technician, Curator, Gallery/Studio/Facilities Manager, Financial Director, HR, Director.

Based on the structure of your organisation, it's worth considering how this team will feed into senior management and/or board level decision making.

Consider how your green team communicates with the wider organisation, and how does the wider organisation, in turn, feed into the green team. This could involve quarterly internal newsletters, or open 'drop-in' meetings to encourage those outside of the team to get involved.

WE RECOMMEND THAT GREEN TEAMS:

- 1 Establish a regular meeting time – ideally, at least once a month.
- 2 Assign a representative to be the GCC point contact. This person will be responsible for receiving and disseminating communications from GCC across the team.

- 3 Complete a baseline carbon report.
- 4 Work through GCC's list of [Effective Actions](#).
- 5 Build a [bespoke Decarbonisation Action Plan](#).
- 6 Set targets and review them regularly.

EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Having a Green Team dedicated to identifying challenges and making changes across an organisation won't solve every problem. Sustainability requires that everyone becomes involved, so embedding a culture of environmental responsibility beyond your Green Team is crucial. Below are some ideas on how to make sure that environmental considerations aren't siloed within a single team:

Could you consider appointing an environmental voice to the board, to ensure that the planet is considered at every key decision-making moment? (As an example, this was recently done by cosmetics brand, [Faith in Nature](#)).

Include environmental responsibility criteria on all job descriptions, e.g. 'demonstrable commitment to environmental sustainability'.

Consider how your commitment to sustainability is shared with new employees. Could sustainability training be integrated into the onboarding process? This could be as simple as a 30 minute sit down with the Green Team leader to share your organisation's environmental goals, targets, and values.

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LEARN MORE

- Green Teams, Gallery Climate Coalition
- Carbon Literacy

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Sometimes, artworkers don't feel 'qualified' to speak about climate-related issues within their organisations. We've found that some members feel more confident after undertaking training in this area, such as [Carbon Literacy](#) training.

GCC recommends that organisations seek relevant training and encourages members to take part in Carbon Literacy training or equivalent to help build a level of confidence across the team. However - **don't let this delay you from taking action.** Sourcing funds for, and setting up organisation-wide training should not act as a delaying tactic. No one is an expert, and all of us are learning. GCC produced this guide so that anyone, within any organisation, whatever their level of understanding, can begin taking action today.

// Sustainability requires that everyone becomes involved, so embedding a culture of environmental responsibility throughout your company is crucial.

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● **STEP 1** **APPOINT A GREEN TEAM OR AMBASSADOR**

In order to set a 2030 target, we all need a starting point. That’s why we ask GCC members to calculate their 2019 annual carbon footprint. That figure will act as your baseline.

Measuring the carbon emissions of your operations is one of the most important steps you can take as an organisation. This will help you to be strategic with your climate action, based on the areas which have the most impact. We suggest 2019 as it’s a pre-COVID year that lines up clearly with the IPCC’s global carbon reduction targets.

This online tool focuses on the most significant areas of emissions in the visual arts and where arts organisations can immediately start taking action (shipping, flights and building energy), providing an easy-to-use method for measuring these emissions – as well as making a rough estimate of some of the smaller parts of your carbon footprint too. To find out more about what’s included, and what’s not, see our [Calculator User Guide](#).

● **STEP 2** **MEASURE EMISSIONS**

YOU CAN’T MANAGE WHAT YOU HAVEN’T MEASURED!
GCC asks members to make carbon reporting an annual task, similar to tax returns or general financial record keeping.

By submitting regular annual data, you can effectively track the impact of implementing changes as your emissions reduce, and you move towards your reductions target.

All data gathered via the calculator helps us develop more effective tools and strategies to tackle our emissions. For support in using the calculator, please see [GCC’s Carbon Calculator User Guide](#), [Data Collection Template](#) and [Video Tutorial](#).

● **STEP 3** **ANALYSE YOUR DATA**

If you are new to GCC, and gathering data for 2019 is not possible (e.g. if you were founded post-2019, or have grown rapidly in the last few years), we suggest you set a target against a 2021 baseline. Reducing emissions by 50% from a 2021 figure will still keep you broadly in line with global climate targets for 1.5 degrees.

GCC is currently working on updating the calculator to better serve our members. Should you have any suggestions, or are interested in feeding into the redevelopment of the tool, register your interest in attending one of our regular feedback sessions by e-mailing info@galleryclimatecoalition.org.

● **STEP 4** **SET REDUCTION TARGETS**

GCC CARBON CALCULATOR
We’re aware that many of our members do not have the resources to carry out a detailed carbon audit. This is why we developed the user-friendly GCC online carbon calculator.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN MEASURE
There are some footprint elements that are trickier to measure and aren’t included in the GCC calculator yet, such as material use in exhibition builds. There are also areas of ‘shared responsibility’ such as visitor travel and staff commuting that we’d recommend reporting on separately from your core operational footprint. We’re working on tools to hopefully make these things easier to calculate in the future, but in the meantime we’d suggest getting started on the things you can measure – shipping, travel and energy – and keep an eye out for guidance from GCC on how to assess and set targets against these trickier areas in the near future.

● **STEP 5** **IMPLEMENT CHANGES**

5 Steps Taking action on carbon

We recommend that larger organisations, or those with more complex operations or that have the means to do so, should either use [Julie's Bicycle's calculator](#) or consult with external carbon auditors. Julie's Bicycle's tool is more detailed than the GCC calculator, and includes functions to measure water consumption, waste generation and recycling, and production materials.

// You can't manage what you can't measure

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LEARN MORE

- Carbon Calculator, Gallery Climate Coalition
- Calculator User Guide, Gallery Climate Coalition
- Carbon Calculator Tutorial, Gallery Climate Coalition

● STEP 1 APPOINT A GREEN TEAM OR AMBASSADOR

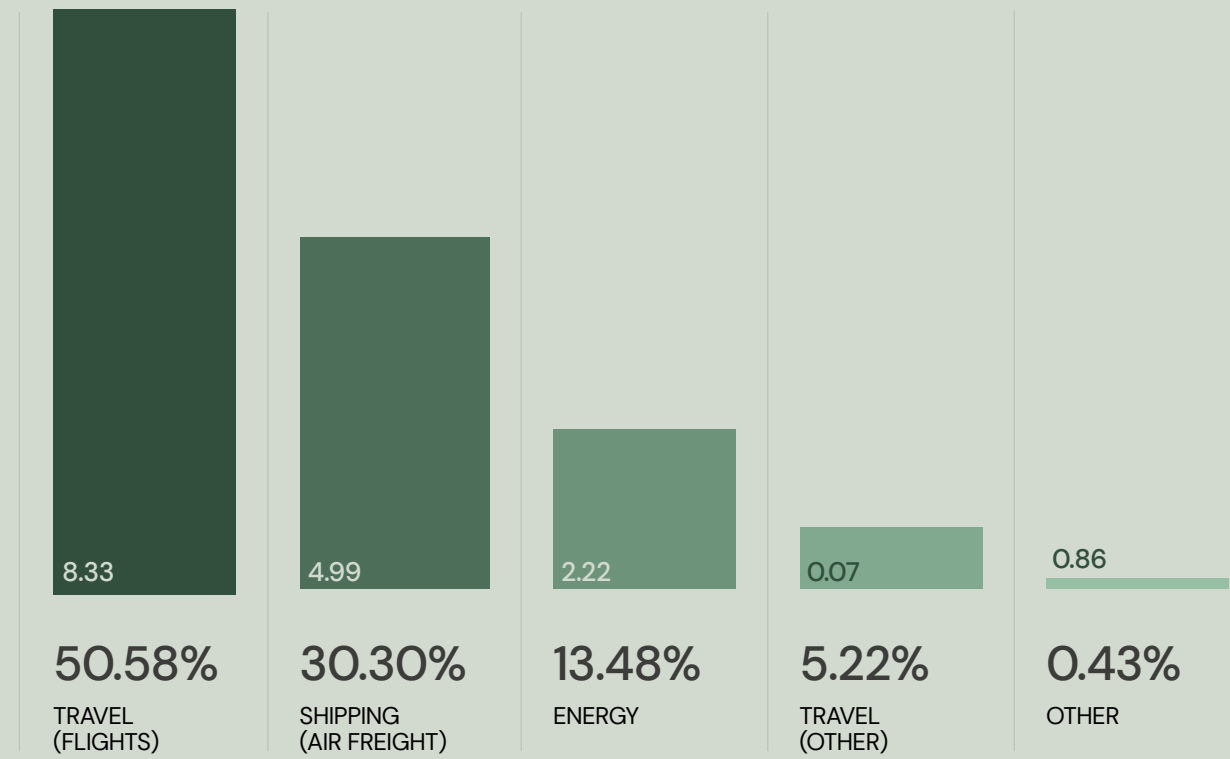
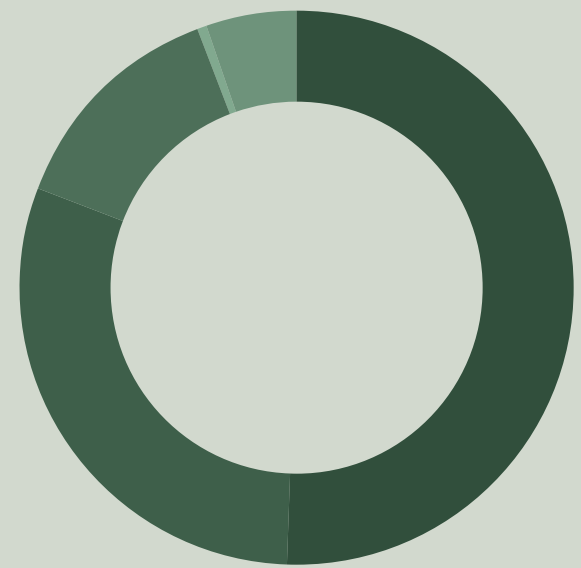
● STEP 2 MEASURE EMISSIONS

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● EXAMPLE CARBON REPORT TCO₂e



16.47 TOTAL TCO₂e

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Carbon Reports,
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Once you have calculated your carbon footprint, there are a series of questions for you or your Green Team or Green Ambassador to consider.

WHAT ARE THE LARGEST PARTS OF YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT?

Understanding which activities create the largest climate impact allows you to prioritise the actions that will make the biggest difference.

WHERE ARE THE MAIN OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE?

As soon as you dig deeper into your data, you will quickly spot which specific actions, events and time periods make the biggest contribution to your emissions. Perhaps three large exhibitions together accounted for half of your shipping footprint? Maybe a quarter of your air travel footprint came from a few long distance journeys to a specific destination? Which months of the year was your energy use highest? (This is useful because it will indicate whether heating or cooling creates the highest energy demand in your building or buildings or whether particular exhibitions had an especially high or low energy demand).

HOW DO YOUR RESULTS COMPARE WITH OTHERS IN THE GCC NETWORK?

We are asking all GCC members to share their results with the rest of the network, as this allows us to learn from each other and encourages others to measure their footprint too. You can see published results [here](#).

WHERE ARE THE ROADBLOCKS AND HOW CAN WE TACKLE THESE?

Each organisation will experience different obstacles to decarbonisation. Take stock and consider what roadblocks will be specific to your organisation, then consider what can be done to work through

these challenges. We've put together a section on addressing obstacles on [page 56](#), based on the conversations we've had with our membership.

If there is something you are struggling with that isn't covered here, don't hesitate to get in contact with us at GCC. We also recommend reaching out to fellow GCC members. It is through collaboration that we can find solutions to our shared challenges.

5 Steps Taking action on carbon

It can be hard to plan for a target that feels far into the future. This is why we recommend setting an interim target at a mid-way point in your journey to 2030.

If in doubt, a 30% target by 2025 is a good starting point to aim for (depending on where you are starting, 2026 or 2027 could be a good mid-way point too). It will either put you ahead of the game for a 50% target, or act as a launchpad from which you can accelerate your efforts to a 70% reduction by 2030.

Whilst it may be possible to sketch out a pathway to achieving reductions, a certain leap of faith is required. We can't know exactly what will happen over the next few years: what new challenges may arise, or opportunities might appear. However, we can't allow uncertainty to prevent us from setting targets and taking action.

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- How do I set a carbon budget

● **STEP 1** APPOINT A GREEN TEAM OR AMBASSADOR

● **STEP 2** MEASURE EMISSIONS

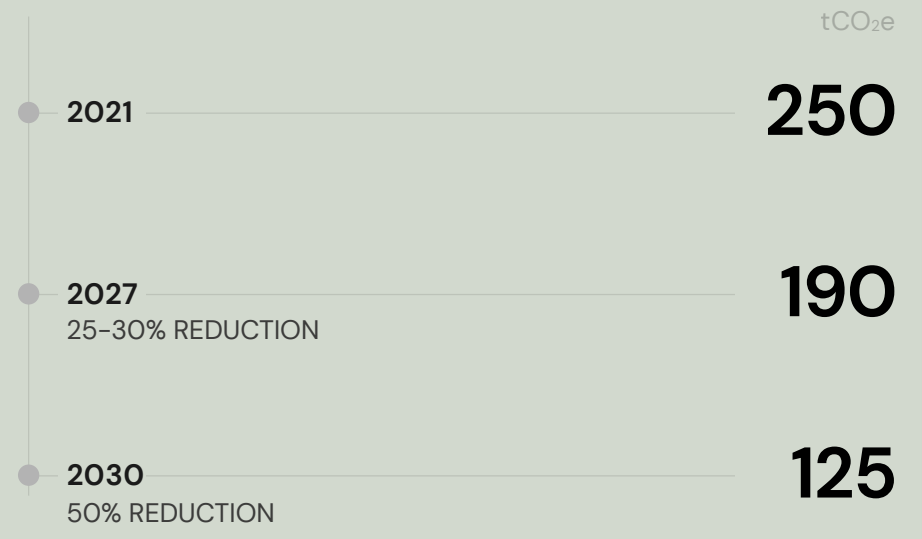
● **STEP 3** ANALYSE YOUR DATA

● **STEP 4** SET REDUCTION TARGETS

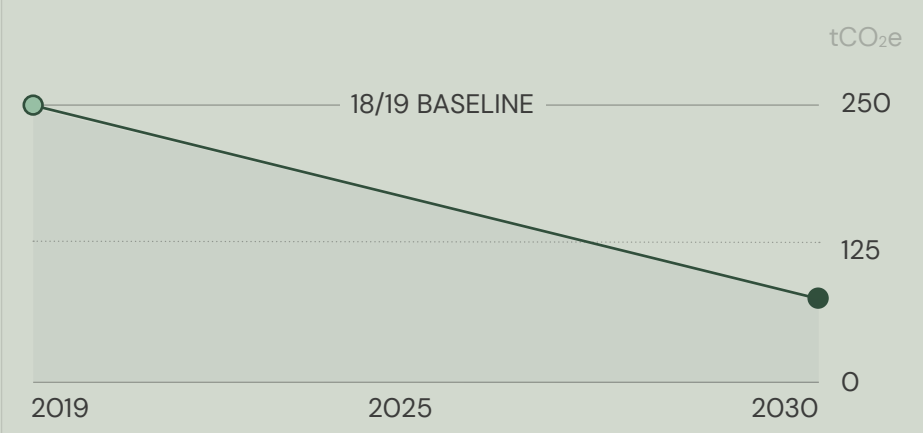
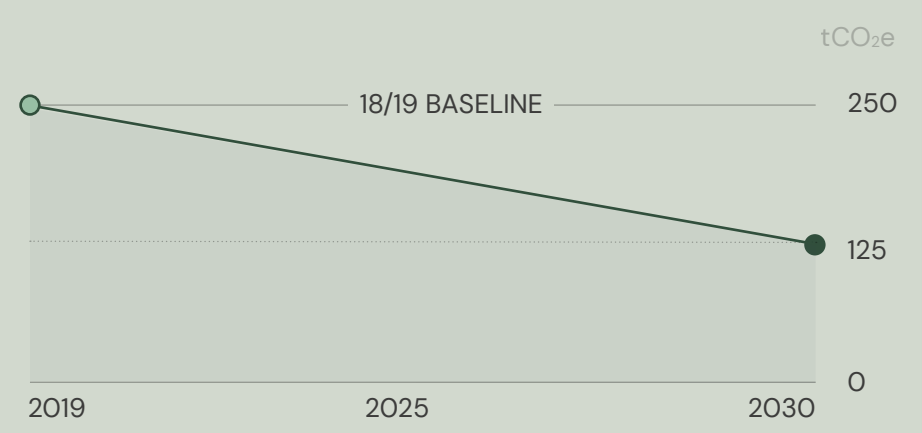
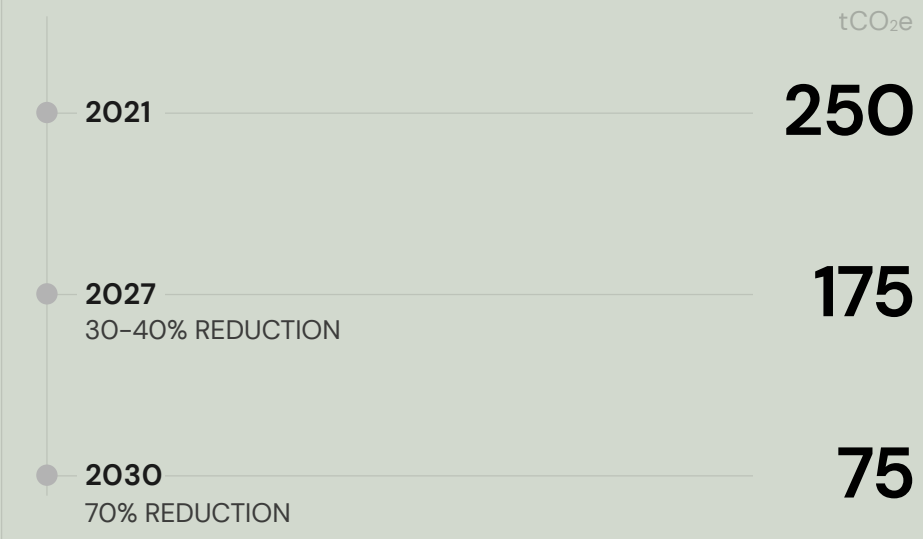
● **STEP 5** IMPLEMENT CHANGES

● **EXAMPLE REDUCTION PATHWAYS**

50% PATHWAY



70% PATHWAY



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- Building a bespoke decarbonisation strategy

- STEP 1 APPOINT A GREEN TEAM OR AMBASSADOR
- STEP 2 MEASURE EMISSIONS
- STEP 3 ANALYSE YOUR DATA
- STEP 4 SET REDUCTION TARGETS
- STEP 5 IMPLEMENT CHANGES**

Once you have calculated your emissions and set your targets, it's time to start taking action and implementing changes.

Sit down with your Green Team, work from your list of priorities and potential actions, and start allocating time and resources to creating change. This might involve bringing carbon reduction into your existing processes (e.g. ensuring that planning discussions about future exhibitions and events include conversations about flights and air freight from the outset), or starting new projects (e.g. arranging energy audits for your buildings).

The most important thing is not to be overwhelmed by the task at hand, as this can lead to inaction.

Choose somewhere to make a start, and get going. Aim for a mix of actions that will create short-term reductions, and those that lay the foundations for longer-term change. Make sure you're not neglecting the largest parts of your footprint, and be careful not to get bogged down in discussions about minor sources of emissions. Whilst of course it is good to avoid plastic water bottles at your next event, make sure you're not spending too long debating that, compared to tackling how to cut your air freight.

If you have questions, concerns, or are hitting roadblocks – get in touch. We may not have all the answers immediately, but the role of the coalition is to collectively seek solutions to our common challenges.

// The most important thing is not to be overwhelmed by the task at hand, as this can lead to inaction.

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Best practice Guidelines, Gallery Climate Coalition

Once you’ve completed your Carbon Report and analysed the findings, sit down with your Green Team and – based on your largest areas of emissions – work out your list of priorities and actions.

At the start of this process, we’d advise mapping out how this work might fit into the next 6 – 12 months of your schedule, and when and how progress will be reviewed.

GCC recommends producing an annual strategy, setting quarterly review points, and reviewing this year on year, alongside your carbon reports and budget reviews.

Some members have found it helpful to allocate a responsible member of staff or department to be responsible for implementing each action.

The following pages give an example of how GCC Member, Nottingham Contemporary laid out their action plan.

Supporting your decarbonisation strategy

Build a bespoke action plan (example)

Provided by Nottingham Contemporary

● EMISSIONS AREA

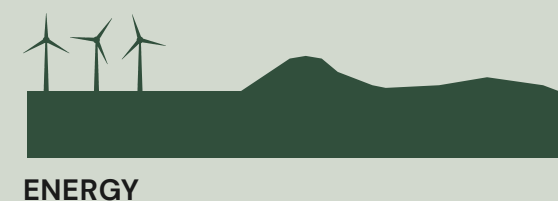
This should be prioritised in order of your emission impacts. eg. Their 2019 Carbon report showed that building energy use caused the most emissions

● PRIORITIES

This should clearly communicate what the aims are for your organisation. Try to stick to 1 or 2 objectives for each emissions area for clarity. Use [GCC's Best Practice Guidelines & Effective Actions](#) to help guide your organisation's objectives.

● ACTIONS

These should include a mixture of short-term 'easy wins' and longer-term investments in change. It's important to assign each action to a department, or even better an assigned staff member who will be responsible for reporting back.



● PRIORITY 1

Conduct annual energy audit in order to identify and reduce inefficiencies, and track reductions.

- Investigate costs of BMS system upgrade for integrated metering, which would provide more data on how we're consuming energy (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- Investigate HVAC regulations and loan agreement stipulations (Insert assigned department or staff member)

● PRIORITY 2

Reduce net energy consumption by investing in onsite power generation

- Continue to seek necessary investment (£80–100k) for installation of solar panels – anticipate 11–12% reduction in energy consumption (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- Use networks to collectively lobby for proper capital investment in buildings (Insert assigned department or staff member)



● PRIORITY 2

Consider location of artist/artworks and environmental impact of travel/shipping as part of curatorial decision-making processes, involving artists, lenders and relevant parties at an early stage in project timeline

- Commit to 2 projects p/a with UK-only shipping and 2 projects p/a with UK-based artists (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- Invite non-UK contributors to deliver via Zoom/live-stream, avoiding international travel (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- When possible, collaborate with other organisations or piggy-back on artists being in the UK for other reasons (Insert assigned department or staff member)

Supporting your decarbonisation strategy

Example action plan (example)

Provided by Nottingham Contemporary

● EMISSIONS AREA

This should be prioritised in order of your emission impacts. eg. Their 2019 Carbon report showed that building energy use caused the most emissions

● PRIORITIES

This should clearly communicate what the aims are for your organisation. Try to stick to 1 or 2 objectives for each emissions area for clarity. Use [GCC's Best Practice Guidelines & Effective Actions](#) to help guide your organisation's objectives.

● ACTIONS

These should include a mixture of short-term 'easy wins' and longer-term investments in change. It's important to assign each action to a department, or even better an assigned staff member who will be responsible for reporting back.



SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT

● PRIORITY 3

Plan shipping schedules well in advance, prioritising consolidated road freight, sea freight and other low emissions options (hybrid or electric). Use zero emissions couriers for short journeys.

- Speak to insurers about covering sea freight (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- Communicate sustainability targets to shippers (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- Research zero emissions couriers in the UK (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- Research local electric taxi companies (Insert assigned department or staff member)

● PRIORITY 4

Keep emissions records as part of registrarial duties for each show.

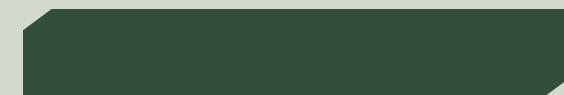


STAFF TRAVEL

● PRIORITY 5

Re-consider what is 'essential'. Prioritise train and road travel over air, and consolidate meetings/research to make trips more efficient.

- Commit to train-first travel policy, using tools such as [Seat61](#) (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- If unavoidable, quota of 2 short-haul and 1 overseas flight p/a (Insert assigned department or staff member)



PACKAGING AND MATERIALS

● PRIORITY 5

Re-consider what is 'essential'. Prioritise train and road travel over air, and consolidate meetings/research to make trips more efficient.

- Commit to train-first travel policy, using tools such as [Seat61](#) (Insert assigned department or staff member)
- If unavoidable, quota of 2 short-haul and 1 overseas flight p/a (Insert assigned department or staff member)

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Create a carbon budget

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How do I build a carbon budget?

Once you have your mid-way and 2030 targets, it might be useful to set specific year-on-year milestones as you work towards these goals. You could do this by looking at the total tonnes of carbon emitted and then working out what level of reduction will be needed on average per year to reach that total goal. This is your 'Carbon Budget'.

You can then look at your flights, shipping, energy use, etc. and think about the actions you need to take in each of these areas to reach the annual reduction you need.

The process is comparable to financial budgeting. Set yourself an annual total that should not be exceeded, then plan your activities accordingly.

This level of detail might not be necessary for all organisations – particularly smaller ones – but it can be a helpful way to make the sometimes abstract notion of emissions more approachable.

Larger organisations might want to break their carbon budget down between departments, locations, projects and operational categories.

Of course, our progress towards our mid-way and our 2030 targets is unlikely to be linear in real life. Some parts of the footprint might turn out to be easier to decarbonise than expected, whilst others might be harder. The COVID pandemic caused a major drop in most organisations' emissions, which has bounced back at varied rates and in different ways in different

locations and for different activities, and the longer term impacts of this are not yet fully clear.

Annual carbon allocations or carbon budgets won't perfectly capture this, but they are a useful tool for driving change through an organisation.

See the [FAQ section](#) for more advice on setting annual carbon targets or budgets for different-sized organisations.

// The process is comparable to financial budgeting.

Set yourself an annual total that should not be exceeded, then plan your activities accordingly.

● EXAMPLE OF ANNUAL CO₂e ALLOCATION WORKING TOWARDS A 2030 TARGET



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Supporting your decarbonisation strategy

Set up a Strategic Climate Fund (SCF)

As has been widely agreed by environmental specialists, conventional ‘carbon offsetting’ is not the fastest, fairest or most effective way to tackle the climate crisis. Therefore, GCC does not recommend the use of carbon offsetting. Our reasons for this are outlined here.

However, there is still an urgent need for donations to frontline initiatives that protect the environment and biodiversity, as well as investment in effective decarbonisation projects.

Reducing your own emissions won't be enough to address the climate emergency. We must be decarbonising and funding effective climate initiatives

As GCC membership is largely in the Global North, we have a responsibility to not simply reduce our own emissions but to acknowledge that the wealth, infrastructure and security that underpins our businesses and institutions has been built on hundreds of years of historical carbon pollution and colonialism. This gives us a clear responsibility to use our resources to accelerate wider change and support frontline initiatives, especially in the Global South.

Taking all this into account, GCC has developed “Strategic Climate Funds” (SCFs), which is an ethical climate financing policy for the visual arts sector.

HOW DO SCFS WORK?
Arts organisations calculate their annual carbon footprint, set targets, create action plans and follow best practice guidelines in order to reduce their environmental impacts as much as possible.

They then either use the size of their emissions footprint (estimated via [GCC’s Carbon Calculator](#)) or set a percentage of annual revenue in order to calculate how much money to set aside each year into an SCF.

This fund can then be spent in any and all of the following ways, depending on the specific needs and preferences of the organisation:

- 1 Investing in carbon reduction measures within their organisation that would otherwise be unaffordable.
- 2 Supporting initiatives to urgently reduce the art world’s carbon footprint.
- 3 Supporting frontline projects and campaigns that will make a strategic difference to the climate crisis on the ground right now.

Important: This policy does not permit users to claim carbon neutrality or net-zero emissions as the result of making donations. The SCF process won’t make emissions disappear, but it is a fairer way to finance effective environmental projects and will help accelerate wider systemic change.

SPENDING STRATEGIC CLIMATE FUNDS

Once you have money in your fund (learn more about this [here](#)) you will then need to decide how to spend it. As outlined above, this does not necessarily mean donating to external organisations, although we do strongly encourage doing this with at least part of your SCF. We refer to these as **External Donations (i)**. The fund can also be used for **Internal Investments (ii)** that can directly reduce the environmental impacts of your operations by ‘greening’ your own operations and supply chain.

I. EXTERNAL DONATIONS: GCC STRATEGIC CLIMATE FUND PARTNERS

In line with the [SCF Partner Selection Criteria](#), we’ve chosen projects that span three major areas where urgent climate action is needed:

- a. Defending and expanding forests and wetlands.
- b. Shifting to climate-friendly agriculture.
- c. Keeping fossil fuels in the ground.

// It's important to note that SCFs do not permit users to claim carbon neutrality as the result of making donations

(2 / 2)
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Set up a Strategic Climate Fund (SCF)

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- Strategic Climate Funds

GCC works to raise awareness and funds from within the art market to support carefully selected organisations that:

- Keep fossil fuels in the ground and greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.
- Protect natural environments, their biodiversity and their human inhabitants.
- Respect the principles of climate justice.
- Are effective at doing the above within our 2030 timeline.

Based on these criteria, GCC has identified and partnered with several organisations that we would recommend our members to donate to, these are: [Rainforest Action Network](#), [ClientEarth](#), [Solar Aid](#), [Art to Acres](#), and [AgroEcology Fund](#). GCC is confident that all of these schemes will have a positive impact within our 2030 timeline.

II. INTERNAL INVESTMENTS: SCFS ‘GREENING’ OPERATIONS

For a truly sustainable arts sector we need cleaner, affordable alternatives for international shipping, local art transport, low-energy lighting and temperature control, packaging, display materials, printing, and international travel. Some options already exist, but others need more support.. This is where strategic investments in the arts sector via SCFs can help make a difference:

- Subsidise lower-carbon purchasing options, where you might otherwise have bought a cheaper but more polluting alternative, such as switching to art supplies made from reclaimed or recycled materials.
- Subsidise lower-carbon transport options, such as taking trains for medium-range journeys.
- Upgrading/retrofitting buildings to make them more efficient.
- Switching any owned or leased vehicles for lower-carbon alternatives, e.g. cargo trikes and electric delivery vehicles.
- Installing insulation and draught-proofing.
- Switching to 100% LED lighting.
- Installing on-site renewable energy or heat generation such as solar panels.
- Replace a gas heating system with an electric heat pump.

// Reducing emissions alone won't be enough to address the climate emergency. We must be decarbonising and funding effective climate initiatives.

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Build your networks

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- Become a member
Gallery Climate Coalition

Thankfully, the sustainability conversation has progressed hugely in recent years, and more and more galleries and businesses are taking their responsibility seriously.

With more of the sector now active in this space, transparency, alignment, and communication between networks becomes increasingly important. Collaboration is key. We don't have enough time to work in silos.

Below are some ideas to consider, to ensure we are building strong communities and networks, better supporting one another, and making sure that we aren't doubling up on the same work:

- **Be vocal.** Utilise your networks to share news of successes and innovations – as well as struggles. You never know who might already have a solution for you.
- **Build alliances on local, national and international levels.** Is there an [International Volunteer Team](#) local to you? If not, why not start one?
- **Become a GCC member.** By being part of the GCC community you'll be kept up to date with the latest guidance, innovations and best practices.
- **Support our campaigning.** There is power in numbers, and GCC has already seen successes in harnessing the power of the coalition to lobby for systemic change.

- **Be transparent and accountable** – we encourage members to share their reports and case studies to enable transparency across the sector.
- **Contribute to the GCC blog.** We welcome submissions from members. These can be articles, success stories, illustrations, case studies, product reviews etc.

/// Collaboration is key. We don't have time to work in silos.

Supporting your decarbonisation strategy

Initiate change through the supply chain

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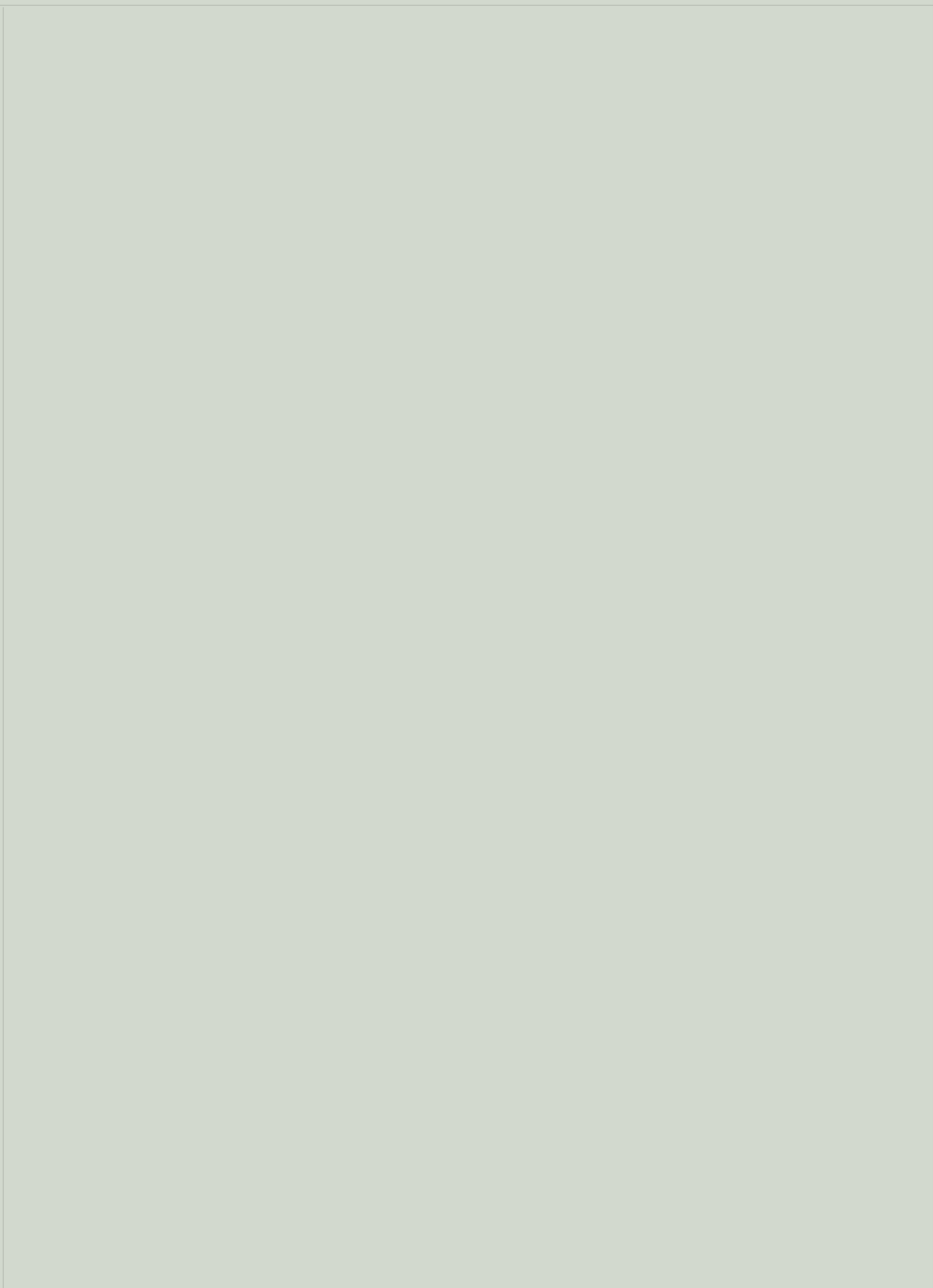
- Sustainable Shipping Campaign, Gallery Climate coalition
- Finance Guidelines, Gallery Climate Coalition
- Waste Guidelines, Gallery Climate Coalition

A significant part of the art sector’s potential for positive change lies in who we choose to work with. By choosing to work with suppliers, banks, sponsors and other partners who prioritise environmental responsibility, we can make impacts that reverberate beyond the industry.

As an example, we have already seen art shipping companies take the need for emissions reductions more seriously in response to GCC’s [Sustainable Shipping Campaign](#).

As part of any procurement process, require that your key suppliers demonstrate environmental best practices. This could involve:

- Ensuring that the shippers you work with are aligned with GCC’s [Sustainable Shipping Campaign](#).
- Reviewing the banks, funders and partners you work with and ensuring that they are aligned with GCC’s [Finance guidelines](#).
- Speak to your waste management company about your waste reduction goals and ask the questions as laid out in GCC’s [Waste guidelines](#). GCC London have put together an email [template](#) to support this. (Log in as a member to view the template).



Haverkamp Leistenschneider

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Haverkamp Leistenschneider is a commercial gallery based in Berlin. A younger organisation with a small team of three, the gallery has made both large and small changes over the past three years to reduce its carbon emissions.

After calculating its baseline carbon footprint, gallery staff identified business travel (particularly flights to art fairs), air freight of artworks to exhibitions, and building energy use as the three main sources of the gallery’s emissions.

The team then set specific targets to cover each of these areas. These included:

- Reducing flights to 50% of pre-Covid levels by 2025, and 25% by 2030
- Ensuring that the majority of international shipping is carried out by sea, rail or road by 2028
- Reducing building energy use by 30% before 2030
- Making all packaging materials reusable or curbside recyclable by 2026
- Using low- or zero-carbon vehicles for local deliveries by 2025.

In practice, working towards these targets has meant integrating environmental awareness into the decision-making and day-to-day running of gallery operations. The team plan ahead for exhibitions,

carefully plan their attendance at international events, and engage with their suppliers and contractors.

As many galleries have also found, international travel is a particularly important–yet tricky–problem to address. The Haverkamp Leistenschneider team have dramatically re-thought their approach to travel, and have made substantial carbon savings as a result.

‘I completely changed my approach to travel,’ says Carolin Leistenschneider, partner at the gallery. ‘Within Europe, I only travel by train.’ Over the past year, this has included a night train to the Venice Biennale and journeys from Berlin to Basel and Copenhagen.

Tapping into the local community is also key. Haverkamp Leistenschneider have collaborated with other GCC members in Berlin to tackle sector-wide issues like sustainable packaging.

Working together can strengthen the argument for new, low-carbon alternatives, but it can also help solve practical problems and lead to substantial carbon savings. In 2022, the gallery shared transport to Enter Art Fair in Copenhagen and Vienna Contemporary with other Berlin-based galleries, consolidating shipments into one and travelling together by car.

Other actions have also had an impact: the gallery found a new printer that accepted lower print runs and now print a smaller number of catalogues, reprinting only when there’s demand.

There have been some challenges along the way. As such a small team, Leistenschneider is the sole Green Ambassador, and completing carbon reports can be time-consuming. But setting internal deadlines and planning ahead has given the team time to integrate carbon reporting into the everyday running of the gallery.

What advice would the team have for other smaller galleries who want to make changes?

‘The most important and first step is the carbon calculator, because it completely shows you where to start’ says Leistenschneider. ‘If you see that flights and energy are the big points, then you have to start there. Make a report and see the diagnosis.’

Community and collaboration also go a very long way, particularly for smaller teams who might be pressed for time. ‘Network with other galleries,’ Leistenschneider says. ‘Exchanging ideas and experiences is important.’

// The most important and first step is the carbon calculator, because it completely shows you where to start

Gilane Tawdros,
Director of Whitechapel Gallery

// // What we do
collectively can have
enormous repercussions

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5 Steps Taking action on waste

Waste is one of the most visible aspects of the growing ecological crisis. Material waste (particularly plastic) is a separate, though related, environmental emergency from carbon emissions. However, it poses no less significant threat to long-term human survival on this planet.

Because of this, we ask that all GCC members commit to achieving a near zero-waste* target by 2030.

The GCC Waste & Materials research group have produced extensive best practice guidelines on packaging and waste to support members in reaching this target.

We've also commissioned research into what a circular economic model would look like in the visual arts.

Across the following pages, we've broken down our guidance into 5 steps to support members in building their own strategy to reach near-zero waste by 2030.

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- ▢ Waste Guidelines, Gallery Climate Coalition
- ▢ Packaging Guidelines, Gallery Climate Coalition
- ▢ Principles of Circularity, Gallery Climate Coalition

● **STEP 1** **SET A NEAR ZERO WASTE TARGET**

● **STEP 2** **COMPLETE A WASTE AUDIT**

● **STEP 3** **REVIEW PACKAGING PRACTICES**

● **STEP 4** **IMPLEMENT THE 5 Rs**

● **STEP 5** **MOVE TOWARDS CIRCULARITY**

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● **STEP 3** **REVIEW PACKAGING PRACTICES**

● **STEP 4** **IMPLEMENT THE 5 Rs**

● **STEP 5** **MOVE TOWARDS CIRCULARITY**

We are asking all GCC members to commit to reaching near-zero waste* operations by 2030, where facilities allow.

The reason for this target being ‘near-zero’, rather than simply ‘zero’, is that the availability of waste management infrastructure and systems is dependent on where you are based. Because our ability to successfully ‘recycle’ is somewhat beyond our control, we prefer to focus on the reduction of waste from the outset.

Even if recycling is a feasible option, it is not considered the best end-of-life option for most materials. The waste hierarchy (also known as the 5 R’s), is the go-to tool when building a waste strategy.

The 5 R’s situates recycling as the absolute last resort at the bottom of the hierarchy.

● **THE 5 Rs**

REFUSE

REDUCE

REUSE

REPURPOSE

RECYCLE

* Near-zero waste is defined by GCC as: ‘As close to nothing as possible going to landfill or incinerator, in the regions where facilities permit’.

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- Waste and Materials Ki book, Ki Culture

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All organisations should conduct a waste audit and set an annual target for reduction. This will allow you to better understand what types of waste you produce and identify areas for improvement.

A waste audit involves reviewing the waste created, and recording and analysing the findings. Please see [Ki Culture’s Waste and Materials Ki Book](#) (p. 55) for a How To Guide.

GCC will soon be publishing examples of waste audits from members. If you would like to share yours, please get in touch.

// Waste is the thing that nobody wants to think about, nobody wants to see, nobody wants to encounter. We threw that thing away, that's where it belongs... But it's only by embracing waste and looking at it squarely, that you can make changes, that you can enable the shift in society that we need to see.

Justin McGuirk, Chief Curator, Design Museum
Speaking at [Climate Crisis >> Art Action](#)

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Choosing environmentally responsible packaging materials for fine art shipping often presents a dilemma.

On one hand, we should use materials that are the least damaging to the planet – for example, naturally derived from renewable resources with a low carbon footprint and/or that are durable enough for multiple reuse. On top of this, we want materials to be either curbside recyclable (e.g. can be handled by your local authority/council/state waste management or biodegradable at their end-of-life. On the other hand, ensuring the safe transport of objects is paramount and requires a case-by-case assessment).

The synthetic packaging materials we traditionally use for fine arts shipping (e.g. plastic films, polyfoams, bubble wrap, and Tyvek) have been tried and tested as packaging materials, but are manufactured with petrochemicals – meaning chemicals derived from fossil fuels through processes that are toxic to the natural environment and humans alike.

While these materials are often theoretically recyclable, this frequently does not happen due to lack of recycling infrastructure, and thus are either incinerated (producing large amounts of CO₂ and toxic emissions, which contributes to air and water pollution), or sent to landfill.

Takeback programs and collection points exist for these difficult-to-recycle materials, but are regionally specific and often only accept the materials in large quantities, presenting issues of storage and feasibility.

A blanket set of recommendations for sustainable packaging, unfortunately, does not exist, however,

the waste hierarchy provides guiding principles and informs best practices.

It's important to consider the below points when making a decision about the best type of packaging available:

- What types of packaging materials are available locally?
- What is the material and fragility of the artwork? What packaging materials should be avoided? How much packaging is necessary?
- Is the artwork being shipped one way or multiple times? If multiple, harder-wearing, reusable materials are preferable. If one-way, explore naturally derived materials.
- What is the duration of transport and the likelihood of storage? This will help to determine whether bio-based materials are preferable to reusable ones.
- What are the regional waste streams available to your organisation, and what materials can be easily recycled? Speak to your waste management company for clarity on this.

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- Waste Guidelines, Gallery Climate Coalition

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● **STEP 5** **MOVE TOWARDS CIRCULARITY**

The 5 R’s are a guide for managing and reducing waste. They follow a fixed hierarchy: Refuse, Reuse, Reduce, Repurpose, Recycle.

REFUSE

- Tell suppliers not to use unnecessary packing materials. Inform them of [GCC’s Banned Materials list](#), and ask them to use alternatives.
- Refuse single use plastics. If a synthetic material must be used, make sure it can be reused multiple times.
- Substitute synthetic packing materials for natural biodegradable products whenever possible.

REDUCE

- Redesigning crates and packaging methods that reduce the amount of packaging materials is an easy win. [PACCIN](#) provides resources on the best practices in packaging methods.
- Rethink the amount of packing materials required for safe transport.
- Set a target to half the amount of packaging you order over the next year.
- Ask framers and other suppliers to minimise their packaging, especially for short journeys.
- Use custom or appropriately sized boxes to avoid filling empty space with excessive materials.
- Reusing packaging materials and keeping them in use for as long as possible is another sustainable strategy. The GCC Packaging guidelines offer tips such as washing Tyvek for reuse and choosing a

packaging tape that doesn’t tear (and subsequently ruin) various packaging materials

REUSE

- Employ proper packing techniques to ensure the reuse of the materials. Take pride in using materials efficiently and sustainably.
- Maintain cleanliness to prolong the life of the synthetic packaging materials. Wipe down working surfaces before packing artworks and keep packaging materials in containers away from dust and dirt. Regularly clean storage areas.
- Refer to the [Advised Tape & Materials Combinations Chart](#) in order to extend the life of wrapping materials.
- Tyvek is a highly versatile and low impact material. With appropriate care it can be reused many times.
- Be aware which tapes are compatible with what materials to minimise damage and allow maximum reuse.
- Tyvek is two-sided. Knowing which side is which is essential for correct usage.
- Tyvek can be washed with a damp cloth.
- Label packing materials with instructions for reuse.
- Prioritise reusable fine art packing materials such as crates and pouches.
- Traditional materials such as blankets, cotton straps and glassine are reusable and low impact.

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BARDER.art

PACCIN

Waste, Gallery Climate Coalition

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● STEP 2 **COMPLETE A WASTE AUDIT**

● STEP 3 **REVIEW PACKAGING PRACTICES**

● **STEP 4 IMPLEMENT THE 5 Rs**

● STEP 5 **MOVE TOWARDS CIRCULARITY**

- Reuse exhibition furniture to the point of failure. Be aware of the items in your inventory and make plans around them. Do not purchase materials or equipment that cannot be used multiple times.

- Share equipment, furniture and materials with other organisations to avoid bringing new objects into existence.

REPURPOSE

- Start a ‘scraps bin’ for material off cuts.
- Store received materials and adapt for future use.

- Repurpose art packaging materials for regular packaging needs, such as this [tapping technique](#) using cardboard.

- Repurpose cardboard into softpacks for framed artworks.
- Turn Tyvek and foam scraps into support cushions for crate padding.

- Share materials that are no longer suitable for art packing with studios, local schools or community centres, or post materials on material-sharing platforms, such as [BARDER.art](#).

- Repair, modify and adapt existing exhibition furniture rather than sending them to landfill.

RECYCLE

- Recycling isn’t as commonplace as one may think. Most municipal recycling facilities are not equipped to sort different polymer groups and often incinerate plastics instead of recycling them.

- Plastic bags, films, and wraps are not kerbside recyclable because they jam the machinery at recycling facilities. Synthetic foams and Tyvek are also not typically kerbside recyclable. However, various recycling programs are available for these materials, depending on location.

- Refer to the GCC Waste resource or your regional GCC sub-site for more information on recycling programmes.

5 Steps Taking action on waste

The ultimate solution to the waste problem is a circular economy. Sustainability is not possible unless we change the way we consume.

The art sector has a problem with packaging consumption and disposal. To solve this issue new systems based on innovation, clearly defined responsibilities, and circularity are urgently needed.

Circularity is a new and quickly evolving field. In the next few years there will be a significant shift in how materials are consumed which means that whoever introduces packaging materials into the system would remain responsible for them throughout their lifecycle. Until these systems are widely implemented at a legislative level, GCC advises members to:

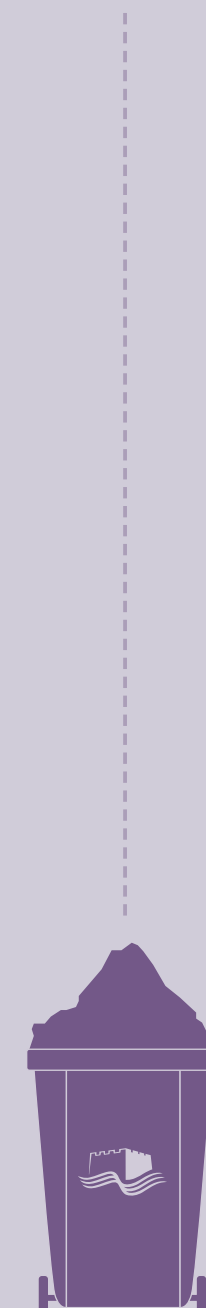
- Innovate and support the development of truly sustainable materials so that all products used are reusable, recyclable or compostable.
- Circulate materials so that they remain within the system as long as possible.
- Materials that cannot be eliminated or reused must be collected, sorted, recycled or composted after use. Improving and scaling these systems is a key challenge to achieving a Circular Economy.

In our current economy, we take materials from the Earth, make products from them, and eventually throw them away as waste – the process is linear. In a circular economy, by contrast, we stop waste being produced in the first place

Ellen Macarthur Foundation

● THREE APPROACHES TO WASTE

LINEAR ECONOMY



RECYCLING ECONOMY



CIRCULAR ECONOMY



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4 Addressing the obstacles

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Bad habits and social convention

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One of the most powerful decarbonisation tools we have is the question “why?”. So many polluting art world practices – from first-class courier flights for single objects to overspecified energy-hungry climate control settings – are happening out of habit, rather than need. We all need to get better at challenging conventions and habits that are no longer appropriate in a climate emergency, as well as being more open about being challenged ourselves.

If you’re feeling nervous about questioning long-held practices in your workplace, remember that many people around you are probably feeling the same. Levels of concern about the climate crisis have rocketed over the last few years, and overwhelming majorities of people across the world now understand the need for action. At GCC, we’ve seen this increased concern very much reflected in the arts and culture sector, perhaps even more so than in general society.

If something at your workplace seems difficult to change, don’t try to do it alone – talk to your colleagues, find allies, and look for creative and diplomatic ways to show what needs to change and why.

Of course, it’s not only our own problematic practices we need to challenge, but those of our partners and collaborators too. This can be even more tricky, but the bottom line is that we shouldn’t be afraid to say no, and turn down a potential collaboration or partnership if the other party is insisting on carbon-

heavy activities and unable to compromise. There will almost certainly be alternative partners you could work with who better understand the climate emergency, or different ways of doing the project.

Financial limitations

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Times are financially tough for many businesses right now. This may seem like a difficult moment to invest in low carbon measures, even if they’ll save money in the long run.

If this is the case for you, we’d recommend the following:

- Get started with the actions that you can afford. Some measures, like cutting unnecessary staff travel, [shifting art freight from air to sea](#), and re-using exhibition materials might even save you money right away. Others, such as training staff in more energy efficient behaviour, or pushing your suppliers to cut their own emissions, might be largely cost neutral.
- Focus on spending money where it will make the most difference. For example, switching to a “green” energy supplier can be an expensive choice that only makes a minimal difference, [as explained by Ethical Consumer magazine](#). Holding off on switching suppliers until you have more space in your budgets, and instead prioritising spending on upgraded insulation or LED lighting could be more effective with regard to both your carbon emissions and your running costs.
- If you’re considering actions that require significant upfront investments, such as insulation upgrades, solar panel installations or switching a gas boiler for a heat pump, start by getting the best possible information on the costs and long-term savings

(in terms of both money and carbon). Once you have a clearer picture of the options and costs, make a plan and timeline for how you might fund this. Grants or cheap financing options for low-carbon measures are increasingly available from governments, banks and energy companies.

- For actions with ongoing costs (such as switching to more climate-friendly suppliers and contractors), see if there are deals or partnerships you could form with local green suppliers and start-ups, who might value the profile they would get from public association with your business.

Insurance

Ask your insurers what they are doing to reduce their own climate impacts. This puts pressure on the industry to work better and faster to implement change.

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When it comes to updating shipping practices or making changes to HVAC systems, insurance is often perceived as a significant hurdle. For those of us who aren't insurance experts, this can feel like a complex roadblock.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Speaking to your insurers and insurance brokers is an important step in implementing change. Help them understand your carbon reduction targets and motivations for making improvements to your operations. Many insurance companies and brokers offer free risk management advice, even if you aren't a client.

Since launching, GCC has developed positive working relationships with the insurance industry, and has seen some key breakthroughs in areas that once felt difficult to change.

For example, as part of GCC's Sustainable Shipping Campaign, we worked with representatives of the Lloyd's Market Association (LMA) Joint Specie Committee to develop best practice guidelines for the insurance of artwork travelling via sea freight, hopefully leading to greater adoption of this method of transportation.

To reach this agreement, insurance industry rivals came together to discuss the urgency and need for change, and collectively came to a solution.

CHANGE IS HAPPENING

In the face of climate catastrophe, the insurance industry is having to consider how they can support the transition to a decarbonised world. We are confident that as climate action continues to gain momentum, our insurance policies will start to reflect the changes that are necessary to create an environmentally responsible visual arts sector.

Whilst these larger shifts are taking place, we've put together effective actions for organisations of all shapes and sizes to help them dismantle this roadblock and start implementing changes today:

EFFECTIVE ACTIONS

Speak to your insurers and insurance brokers. Get an understanding of what is and what isn't covered by your current policies. This will help build a level of literacy within your teams. Many insurance companies and brokers offer free risk management advice, even if you aren't a client. Make use of this.

When implementing any changes, put together a list of questions for your insurance providers or brokers: what are you hoping to change and how will this impact your insurance? (e.g. what would it mean for our insurance policies if we were to make changes to the way that we ship work?)

Always get a second and preferably a third opinion. If the answer is 'no', you may be speaking to the wrong person.

Organisational buy in

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While there are always useful actions you can take within your specific role, getting senior management support for broader environmental action will almost certainly be crucial.

If they're not already on board with the need to act on the climate crisis, you might seek to connect more directly with their specific interests and concerns. A few things we suggest to bear in mind:

- Don't try to do it alone. Start by finding and building up a network of allies within your organisation who share your understanding of the need to act quickly and ambitiously on the environmental crisis.
- Where possible, create good examples. Do what you can within your own roles to show that this kind of action is not only possible, but also popular with staff, audiences and other key stakeholders.
- Talk to senior staff and find out their key concerns and any perceived barriers to embracing this work. Are they worried about costs, staff time, or potential threats to income? Are they concerned about accusations of paying lip service or greenwashing if your organisation becomes more outspoken on these issues? See the previous sections of this document for advice on reassuring people on these points, from the falling costs of climate action to the fact that acting now should save time, expense and potential embarrassment in the long run.

- Find and share case studies of similar organisations who have taken action and succeeded in saving money, raising their positive profile, avoided reputational risk etc.
- Look out for GCC events and resources to help you connect with others in the sector and build a strong case for change that's tailored to your own organisation and its challenges. If you have any specific needs or requests, please let us know.

Regional differences

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GCC has members in over 40 countries. We’ve tried to make this document as internationally relevant as possible, but there are many local and regional differences in terms of culture, practice, legislation, funding, and the availability and affordability of environmental solutions.

If you need a more local or regional perspective on any of the issues covered in this document, please let us know – GCC has local volunteer-run branches in Berlin, Italy, LA, NY, Spain and Taiwan, and connections with galleries and other businesses who’d be happy to share their local knowledge in many other locations.

Conversely, if you have a specific local or regional perspective you think it would be important for us to share with the wider network, please do let us know that too.

Technological limitations

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All the technologies we need for a zero carbon society already exist. The Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales has been demonstrating this for years, through their series of Zero Carbon Britain reports, mapping out how fossil-fuel dependent economies could completely decarbonise with existing renewable technologies. The challenge is making these technologies available and affordable to everyone, and rolling them out everywhere.

The good news is that things have been progressing rapidly on this front. The price of solar panels has dropped by 90% in 10 years. A 2022 study found that electric vans in the UK were now 25% cheaper than diesel vans over their lifetimes, including upfront costs. Around 10% of heating for buildings globally is already provided by air source or ground source heat pumps, with the figure growing steadily each year. The COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine temporarily slowed down some of these trends, but things are set to accelerate following large-scale investments in low-carbon technologies by the US, the EU, China and other major players in 2022 and 2023.

As the costs of important decarbonisation technologies – from batteries to wind turbines – continue to fall, the rule of thumb for all of us is going to be: if a low-carbon solution was too expensive or unavailable last year, check again. Prices have probably fallen, new grants may be available, a new local start-up might have appeared offering exactly the solution you need.

Time implications

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- Julie's Bicycle
- Ki Culture
- Art + Climate Action

Even with the best intentions, finding sufficient staff time and capacity to manage the shift to low-carbon operations can be challenging.

Some key points to remember here:

- If your company has the resources to officially designate some staff time towards this work, by incorporating it more formally into people’s roles, this can be extremely helpful – as long as the rest of the organisation don’t then assume they have no responsibility for this work themselves.
- Ensuring that this work doesn’t just fall on one or two people’s shoulders is vital. Forming a Green Team (see [page 13](#)) is an important step, but that team shouldn’t be expected to do all the work – their role is to keep pushing change through the organisation and ensuring everyone outside the immediate team understands their responsibilities too.
- Being proactive on these issues should save you staff time and resources in the long run. Government regulation, funder requirements and audience expectations around environmental responsibility are only going to increase. Being on top of these issues and able to demonstrate active change is a much more efficient approach than scrambling to catch up with growing environmental demands from partners, funders and regulators.

- You are not alone! GCC is here to help and provide tools and resources to make things easier and save you time, along with other organisations such as [Julie’s Bicycle](#), [Ki Culture](#), [Art + Climate Action](#), and [others](#). Together, we can build alliances across the art world, share resources and find ways to work together to make this transformation easier for everyone. If you need any particular help or support and can’t find it, please let us know.

// This isn't about coercing dealers to make change, it is about illuminating the issues and helping members to understand the simple steps they can put in place that can have a powerful impact

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What should we include in our footprint?

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LEARN MORE

- Carbon Calculator, Gallery Climate Coalition

The point of calculating a carbon footprint is to figure out the best opportunities to take action, and to track progress towards that goal. That means you don't need to measure absolutely everything in perfect detail – instead, we recommend focusing on the largest parts of your footprint where you can make the biggest difference, especially if you have limited time and resources to spend on this work.

Building energy, staff travel, and art transport are three of the largest sources of emissions in the visual arts sector. They are also areas that aren't too challenging to measure and where arts organisations have a number of options for immediate action. These should certainly be included in any carbon footprint, and can be calculated using [GCC's free online carbon calculator](#).

Packaging and printing are areas that typically have a lower carbon footprint than energy, travel and art freight, but should still be included if possible, especially as they link to other important environmental issues (such as the plastic waste crisis and the unsustainable use of material resources), separate from their climate impacts. Their carbon footprint can be estimated using the GCC free online calculator.

Staff commuting and visitor travel tend to be more relevant to GCC's non-profit and public members than our commercial members, and have not yet been incorporated into GCC's carbon calculator as they are more complex to measure. We are working

on new tools to help arts organisations estimate these emissions more easily, but until then we appreciate it may be difficult to include them in your carbon footprint.

Other activities (such as gallery waste, water use, exhibition materials, and the transport and delivery of non-art materials) are likely to only add a small amount to your carbon footprint compared to the larger items above. If you have limited time and capacity, we suggest leaving these elements out of your carbon footprint initially. (But do be transparent about doing so).

We are working on updating the GCC carbon calculator to help arts organisations calculate the footprint of these elements more easily in future; however, if you want to include them now we recommend using [Julie's Bicycle's carbon tools](#). In the meantime, arts organisations should still be acting to minimise their gallery waste and exhibition material, in order to meet GCC's near zero waste by 2030 target.

What’s included in GCC’s Carbon Calculator and why?

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- Carbon Calculator, Gallery Climate Coalition

For our carbon calculations for arts organisations, we follow the guidelines laid down by the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, which sets the standard for carbon footprinting worldwide. This means we include all direct energy and electricity use (known as “Scope 1” and “Scope 2”). Everything else that could be included in a carbon footprint is called “Scope 3”.

For Scope 3, we focus on the parts of an arts organisation’s carbon footprint that are:

- Measurable
- Significant
- Within the organisation’s responsibility and control

In other words, the calculator purposely excludes areas of Scope 3 that would require an excessive amount of work to calculate, compared to their likely impact and the organisation’s ability to actually do something about it.

The areas of Scope 3 that are included in the footprint are business travel, shipping, packaging, and printing. These are all areas that can be calculated without too much difficulty, and where arts organisations have the ability to make a difference.

The following Scope 3 areas are likely to have a relatively small impact, but would require a significant amount of work to collect the necessary data, and so have been excluded for now:

- Materials purchased for framing, displaying and exhibiting artworks
- Use of hotels by staff
- The footprint of data services
- Waste disposal
- Water supply and disposal
- Other purchased materials (furniture, office equipment)
- The footprint of investments, pensions and banking

However, we will be refreshing the calculator over the next year, and are looking at ways we could include more of these elements in an optional and user-friendly way in the future. Also, if you carry out a waste audit then several of these elements (such as exhibition materials and gallery waste) will be captured there, and will have greater significance in that context than as part of your carbon footprint.

The following areas of Scope 3 may have a significant impact in some cases, but collecting the data would require a significant amount of work, added to which these areas are not under the full responsibility or control of the arts organisation:

- Staff commuting
- Energy used by staff when working from home
- Transport of artwork and materials to the galleries by third parties, not paid for by the gallery

None of the above elements are included in the carbon calculator, and we do not expect members to measure or set specific targets against them.

However, we would encourage all members to keep these elements in mind and make the lowest-carbon choices possible in relation to them, even though these will not show up in the calculated footprint. Again, if there is interest and demand across membership, we will investigate adding some of these items into future versions of the calculator.

Retail procurement, catering and visitor travel tend to be much more relevant to our non-profit and public members than our commercial members, and have not yet been incorporated into the carbon calculator due to their complexity. They are special categories where we would recommend taking a slightly different approach with regard to measurement and target-setting. GCC is working on tools to support the measurement and management of these categories, stay tuned for updates in 2024!

There are also some “one-off” events, ie. the construction of a new gallery/studio, that could have a significant footprint but wouldn’t fall into the typical annual activities of a gallery and so aren’t captured in the calculator. Again, we suggest these be investigated on a case-by-case basis so galleries can make the lowest-carbon choices possible.

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Carbon Calculator,
Gallery Climate Coalition

Organisation-wide carbon budgets can be a useful tool to support your action plan. They involve deciding in advance what you want your maximum emissions to be in a specific year, and then working to stay within that budget – in exactly the same way as a financial budget.

Here are a couple of ways of doing this:

OPTION 1

Use your annual carbon report to look at the total tonnes of carbon emitted and work out what level of reduction will be needed on average per year to reach that total goal.

So for example, to reach a 30% reduction by 2026 from a 2021 baseline, you would need to see, on average, a 6% reduction every year between 2021 and 2026. That means that in 2022 you would want your total emissions to be 6% lower than in 2021, then in 2023 they'd need to be 12% lower than 2021, and so on.

If you're starting from a 2019 baseline then your calculations will be different, especially as your emissions probably fell during the initial pandemic lockdowns in 2020, and then rose back again in 2021 and 2022. For example, if your emissions in 2022 bounced back to 90% of your 2019 baseline, you could aim to halt that bounceback and bring your emissions down to 70% of your 2019 emissions by 2025. That would require a 5% year-on-year reduction between 2022 and 2025.

Once you've confirmed your baseline and sketched out a path to a 30% reduction by your chosen milestone date (eg. 2025 or 2026), you can then look at the main parts of your footprint (e.g. flights, air freight, building energy) and calculate how much lower they'd each need to be to add up to that total reduction.

The [GCC Carbon Calculator](#) can be a useful tool for working this out – you can use it to plug in some speculative values for flights, shipping and energy and see what carbon total they come out with. Once you've decided what reductions will be needed in each of these areas to achieve the 2023 reductions, you can then do the same for 2024, 2025 and so on. In this way, you can calculate your "upper limits" for km of flights, tonne-km of shipping and KWh of electricity and gas each year. These upper limits can then become your "carbon budget" for each of those years – a total you'll aim to keep within, just like a financial budget.

OPTION 2

Alternatively, you could start by calculating the total reductions in flights, air freight, energy footprint etc. that you need to aim for in order to reach your mid-way carbon budget.

These figures can each be divided by the number of years in order to get the annual reductions – and thus the annual budgets – for each of these parts of your footprint between 2023 and 2026, as above.

Once you've worked out your specific budgets for each part of your footprint, you can then build that into your existing planning process – so when you're planning upcoming exhibitions and events, as well as considering how those plans affect your financial budget you can also consider their impact on your annual carbon budgets, and modify those plans accordingly.

For a larger organisation setting carbon budgets may be more complex. Typically, the overarching budget will be divided between different organisational departments (e.g. the curatorial and education teams), who will then each have responsibility for meeting those budgets. These kinds of formal carbon budgets require a certain amount of resource and capacity to implement, but can be an effective way to drive change through a large organisation.

CARBON BUDGETS WORK BEST WHEN THEY ARE:

- **Presented to staff in understandable terms, rather than as tonnes of carbon.**
For example, if your goal is to reduce the carbon from business flights by 10% in a given year, then it might be easier to set budgets based on the total distance flown by each team/department rather than the tonnes of CO₂e generated by those flights.
- **Allocated clearly within an organisation.**
For example, if you own five different galleries that each carry out international shipping, it may seem fair to ask each of them to reduce the emissions of their shipping by 5%. However, if one gallery already does half its shipping by sea while the rest exclusively use air freight, then it might be fairer (and easier) to ask the galleries using air-freight only to do more.

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- **Backed up by detailed data.**
In order to ask staff to work to carbon budgets, you need to provide annual – or better still quarterly – figures to each team/department/gallery to allow them to track their progress, presented in a way that gives them the information they need.
- **Integrated with existing planning processes.**
To be effective, carbon budgets need to be discussed at key planning meetings and taken on as an organisational responsibility, not left as individual day-to-day decisions. For example, if management asks staff to fly 10% less whilst also committing to attending more art fairs, then staff will find it challenging to meet that flight's budget without management support and agreement on changes in practice, allowing, say, fewer staff to attend each event.
- **Aligned with financial budgets**
To avoid mixed messages or incorrect incentives, a planned 10% reduction in flights should be accompanied by a 10% reduction in the financial budget for flights – and an increase in the financial budget for train travel and/or videoconferencing



What about carbon offsetting?

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- ▢ Strategic Climate Funds, Gallery Climate Coalition

A question we are often asked is:

Should I offset the emissions I can't reduce?

GCC advises against conventional offsetting schemes, as it is difficult to verify the effectiveness of the claims made by many of these schemes, and even if they work as planned they are unlikely to create the reductions we need within a 2030 timeframe. For more information on the problems with offsetting, see our latest advice on this topic [here](#).

Instead, GCC recommends putting funding into projects where we can be more confident they will have an immediate positive impact, either internally or externally. Rather than spending money on schemes that claim to ‘balance’ or ‘neutralise’ some portion of future emissions (claims that are nearly always difficult to justify), we recommend putting that money into measures that will reduce our own emissions more rapidly in the immediate term, and/or help accelerate wider systemic change, even if we can't attach a specific carbon number to those measures.

We call this approach “Strategic Climate Funds” (SCFs). See the [SCF section on page 27](#) for more detailed advice and guidance on how to do this.

What about going “net zero”?

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Here’s our advice on ‘net zero’ targets and carbon offsetting. It’s a position shared by a growing number of environmental organisations and charities, and one that we hope will help simplify the climate targets and action plans of arts organisations.

At the UN climate talks in Paris in 2015, after much debate over targets (and pressure from climate activists and countries of the Global South), the world’s governments agreed that the amount of carbon emitted globally by society should be ‘balanced out’ by the amount absorbed by nature (and maybe some technology) by the second half of the century. This is where the concept of ‘net zero by 2050’ came from – it was never intended as a final target, but as a milestone on the path to zero emissions. Also, crucially, it wasn’t a target proposed by climate scientists but a political compromise to try to keep the world’s governments on board.

While ‘net zero’ does mean something on a global scale, it makes significantly less sense as a target for individual organisations (unless they own or manage large amounts of land). To reach that global net zero milestone, we need everyone who’s emitting greenhouse gases to rapidly reduce those emissions, and everyone with responsibility for lands and oceans to help defend and expand the natural carbon stores provided by the living planet. It makes far more sense for each organisation to focus on the bits of the global balance sheet (emissions or absorptions) where they have the most influence or responsibility,

rather than spend resources on making these things appear ‘cancelled out’ within their own operations – especially when the main tool available for this is offsetting, a practice beset with problems (see the [SCF section](#) of this document for more details).

So, slightly counterintuitively, the best way to reach global net zero may be for individual organisations to *not* set individual net zero targets, but instead focus their resources on where they can make the biggest differences, either by reducing emissions or increasing carbon absorption. For most people in the arts and culture sector, unless you own a park or a forest, it’s the reducing emissions bit where you’re going to have the biggest impact.

Three years after the Paris Agreement, a 2018 UN climate report laid down a clearer and more important target for holding global heating at 1.5 degrees: global emissions reductions of 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 (which equates to 50% reductions from 2019 levels by 2030). This is the minimum target that GCC asks all its members to sign up to – but we strongly encourage everyone to go further and faster than this if they can, and aim for as close to “real zero” as possible, as soon as possible.

This is where GCC’s “Strategic Climate Funds” come in – these are a way to encourage our members to step up their ambitions and support frontline climate solutions without getting tangled up in problematic carbon neutral targets or offsetting schemes. See the [SCF section of this document](#) for more details.

LEARN MORE

- Strategic Climate Funds, Gallery Climate Coalition

What if we already have a ‘net zero’ or ‘carbon neutral’ target?

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- Strategic Climate Funds, Gallery Climate Coalition

Don't worry! Many organisations have done this, following in the footsteps of governments and others*. We're not suggesting you change your net zero target immediately, especially as so many of these targets are hard-won results of lots of internal work and persuasion. Plus, these targets are often out of the direct control of individual institutions, as they've been set by a higher body (e.g. a local authority or university).

Instead, we'd recommend you do the following:

- Make sure the path to your "net zero"/"carbon neutral" target includes a minimum 50% reduction in your actual emissions by 2030. The latest guidance from the Science-Based Targets Initiative states that offsetting should never be used to cover more than 5 - 10% of your target emission reductions; this means that, following best practice, your ‘net zero’ target should be seen as a commitment to at least 90% reductions in real-life emissions by that date. Knowing this, you should be able to track a path to that target that includes at least a 50% reduction by 2030. Of course, if your ‘net zero’ target is 2030, this means you are already effectively committed to a 90% reduction in emissions by 2030, and thus are already more than compatible with the GCC targets.
- Start putting less emphasis on the "net zero" part of your target and instead concentrate on the urgency to reduce emissions by 2030, and the actions you're taking towards that goal. Set some

milestone reduction targets for specific parts of your carbon footprint by 2026 or 2027, and plan how to achieve them.

- At an appropriate moment, if you are able, review your net zero/carbon neutral target and check it is still fit for purpose in light of ongoing revelations and growing concerns around offsetting. Seeing as the latest ‘net zero’ standards require a real-life emissions reduction of 90–95%, what would be the pros and cons of simply setting that as your target instead? Conversely, if meeting your net zero target would require more offsetting than stated in the SBTi guidelines, then how else might that money (and time) be spent if you weren't buying offsets?
- If you choose to move away from a net zero target, then setting up a Strategic Climate Fund (see below) combined with some firm reduction targets can be a positive alternative, and a way to show you aren't reducing your ambition by making this change, but instead being more strategic with your resources whilst staying in line with climate science.

*Following the 2015 Paris agreement, many countries and organisations set their own ‘net zero by 2050’ targets. Much of this no doubt happened in good faith; however, it's hard to ignore that this particular target is not only decades away, but also allows for the use of offsetting or the promise of (unproven) future ‘carbon capture’ technologies, making it attractive for governments and businesses wishing to avoid real emissions cuts today. This led many other organisations to assume that ‘net zero’ targets were best practice, and thus set similar targets.

What if we can't calculate a 2019 baseline?

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- ▢ [Carbon Calculator, Gallery Climate Coalition](#)

If it isn't possible to set a 2019 baseline (perhaps because data from that year is unavailable, or because your organisation didn't yet exist in its current form), then a 2021 baseline can be used instead.

Global emissions in 2021 were only slightly higher than 2019 (following the disruption of the COVID pandemic), and so 2021 can be used as a reasonable proxy. However, we would strongly advise setting a 2019 baseline if you can, as this will allow you to capture the emissions from your pre-pandemic operations, which when compared with your current emissions can provide all kinds of useful information.

What if our organisation is planning to grow?

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Art galleries and related businesses that are planning to grow their operations significantly between now and 2030 – for example, by opening new galleries – are in a slightly more complex situation than those planning to remain roughly the same size

On the one hand, the climate doesn't know or care whether our organisations are growing – the only thing that matters is how much greenhouse gas we are putting into the atmosphere. From this perspective, we need to make sure that we are halving our emissions over the next seven years, even if planning to increase in size.

On the other hand, because GCC's goal is to reduce the carbon footprint of the art world as a whole by 50% by 2030, there is the potential for some flexibility within that framework.

If the arts organisations that are growing are taking up space left by others who are shrinking or closing down (sadly, a common situation during COVID), then as long as the growing organisations are reducing their relative carbon footprint, the emissions from the sector as a whole will still come down.

Any arts organisations planning for significant (more than 50%) growth by 2030 should speak to us, and we can discuss what this means for your target-setting and whether you should set a relative rather than an absolute target. We will need to make sure this is done fairly across the whole sector.

This is an interesting topic and we don't have all the answers. But we are keen to explore this area further with future events and resources.

Do you work for an organisation that is planning on expanding and don't know what that means for your emissions targets? Get in touch – we would like to hear from you.

Are we legally required to report carbon emissions?

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The short answer is: in most cases, no, although it is becoming increasingly likely that this will change in the near future.

Of course, laws vary from region to region, and will differ depending on the size of your organisation. Check with your local authorities to understand the exact requirements of your business.

In the UK, most businesses are not required by law to report carbon emissions. Only large companies (those with a gross income of £36 million or more, balance sheet assets of £18 million or more, or 250 employees or more) must report their energy use and carbon emissions every year.

In the US similar legislation is coming into effect at state-level. In October 2023 Californian Governor Gavin Newsom signed a bill requiring companies with more than \$1bn (£817m) in annual revenue to report greenhouse gas emissions.

Equally, earlier in 2023 the EU passed a ban on environmental claims such as “climate neutral” or “eco”, unless companies can prove that any claims are accurate. As of 2024, large businesses will also need to embed environmental disclosures in their annual report. This will then be extended to smaller businesses in phases through to 2026.

As the need to address the climate crisis becomes increasingly urgent, pressure is mounting on businesses to be transparent about their emissions,

and governments to put legislation in place. Across the globe proposals for Carbon Taxes and legislated reporting are becoming increasingly considered.

Whether or not you are required by law, there are many benefits from carbon reporting voluntarily:

- Increasingly customers, clients and audiences value lower carbon impact
- Measuring can help to reduce energy and transport costs
- With legislation on the horizon, getting ahead now will support your business in the future

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Glossary

● **CARBON AUDIT**

A carbon audit is an assessment of the emissions of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e) produced by an organisation, individual or project. This is a more intensive and in-depth assessment than one produced using the GCC Carbon Calculator. It is usually conducted by an external assessor, consultant or carbon audit agency.

● **CARBON NEGATIVE**

Carbon negative is the point where global emissions become so low that more carbon is being removed from the atmosphere (through absorption by forests, soils, oceans etc.) than is being emitted by humanity. This is a goal we need to reach globally, and the next step beyond “net zero”. It is theoretically possible for a product or organisation to become carbon negative, but (as with net zero) this is difficult to achieve except on a global scale. There are very few credible examples of “carbon negative” organisations or products, even though there are many claims out there – as with offsetting, there’s the problem with timescales, with companies claiming that carbon savings from tree-planting or soil restoration over the next few decades will more than cancel out their current emissions.

● **CARBON NEUTRAL**

If something is carbon neutral, it means that any carbon emissions created are balanced by taking

the same amount out of the atmosphere. There are limited ways to remove carbon from the atmosphere – for example, you can plant trees which absorb CO₂ and release oxygen. However, to be truly “net zero” the emissions would need to be removed from the atmosphere at the same rate that they are being emitted – something that is very difficult to achieve except on a global scale.

● **CARBON OFFSETTING**

Carbon offsetting is a process of reduction or removal of emissions of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases made in order to compensate for emissions made elsewhere. As has been widely agreed by environmental specialists, conventional ‘carbon offsetting’ is not the fastest, fairest or most effective way to tackle the climate crisis. Therefore, GCC does not recommend the use of carbon offsetting. Our reasons for this are outlined [here](#).

● **CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The circular economy is based on three principles: eliminate waste and pollution, circulate products and materials and regenerate nature. It is underpinned by a transition to renewable energy and materials. A circular economy decouples economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. It is a resilient system that is good for business, people and the environment.

● **CO₂**

CO₂ refers specifically to carbon dioxide.

● **CO₂E**

CO₂e stands for carbon dioxide equivalent. It is a system of measuring and comparing the equivalent global warming potential (GWP) of a range of gases against a common unit. CO₂e totals often include the equivalent sums of a number of other gases such as nitrous oxide (N₂O) and/or methane (CH₄).

● **DECARBONISATION**

Decarbonisation is a term used to describe reducing CO₂e emissions resulting from human activity, with the goal of untangling society from our reliance on fossil fuels.

● **GCC CARBON REPORT**

A GCC Carbon Report is the term we use to describe reports produced using GCC's free Carbon Calculator. This is different from a carbon audit. The carbon calculator was designed to strike a balance between being easy to use, so it relies on various estimates and assumptions that allow users to get a quick breakdown of the key areas of emissions associated with their operations (you can find out more about these metrics in the [Calculator User Guide](#)). Because it also relies on users entering their data correctly, Carbon Reports cannot be verified for their accuracy, and therefore cannot be considered an ‘audit’.

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● **INCINERATION**

For many countries waste that is diverted from landfill is sent to be burned in incinerator facilities instead. Incineration is a waste treatment process that uses combustion technologies to burn waste and, as many companies like to claim, transform this ‘waste into energy’ during the process. However, research shows that incinerators are detrimental to our environment and human health.

● **NET ZERO**

At the UN climate talks in Paris in 2015, the world’s governments were debating global climate targets. Unable to agree on firm dates for specific reductions, they ended up with the following compromise: that the amount of carbon emitted globally by society should be ‘balanced out’ by the amount absorbed by nature (and maybe some technology) by the second half of the century. This is where the concept of ‘net zero by 2050’ came from – it was never intended as a final target, but as a milestone on the path to zero emissions.

● **SCOPE 1 EMISSIONS**

Scope 1 emissions are greenhouse gases directly emitted by an organisation, such as from gas burned to heat a building or petrol purchased to burn in a car.

● **SCOPE 2 EMISSIONS**

Scope 2 emissions are greenhouse gases from the production of electricity purchased directly by the organisation.

● **SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS**

Scope 3 emissions are greenhouse gases from the production of electricity purchased by the organisation and other “indirect” emissions. This includes everything that the organisation spends money on, from taxis to flights to printing to shipping.

● **STRATEGIC CLIMATE FUNDS (SCFS)**

GCC has developed “Strategic Climate Funds” (SCFs), which is an ethical climate financing policy for the visual arts sector. Reducing emissions alone won’t be enough to address the climate emergency. We must be decarbonising and funding effective climate initiatives. [Learn more about how SCFs work on page 27.](#)

● **ZERO WASTE**

Zero Waste is a waste management approach focused on waste prevention. This ensures that products and materials are designed to have a long life, and will be reused, repaired, or recycled rather than landfilled or incinerated.

● **ZERO WASTE TO LANDFILL**

Zero waste to landfill is a waste management approach focused on diverting as much waste as possible from ending up in landfill. However, this approach can end up glorifying incineration and ‘waste-to-energy’ facilities as an alternative waste management solution, thus encouraging more waste production.

● **ZERO CARBON**

Zero carbon means that no carbon emissions are being produced from a product or service (for example, a wind farm generating electricity, or a battery deploying electricity). Energy sources like wind and solar do not create carbon emissions when they are used to produce electricity – we refer to these sources as zero-carbon.

<p>GCC 2023 60</p> <p>Decarbonisation Action Plan For Galleries and Art Sector Businesses</p>			
<p>CONTENTS</p>	<p>● ABOUT GCC</p> <p>GCC is an international membership organisation providing environmental sustainability guidelines for the art sector.</p>	<p>in contributing to future Action Plans, please get in touch.</p>	<p>● AUTHORS</p> <p>Gallery Climate Coalition</p>
<p>▢ Introduction</p>			
<p>1 Context</p>			
<p>2 Decarbonisation strategy</p>	<p>The coalition’s primary targets are to facilitate a reduction of the visual art sector’s greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 50% by 2030 (in line with the Paris Agreement’s goal of keeping global warming to below 1.5°C), and promote zero-waste practices.</p>	<p>Through the generosity of our Supporters Circle, we have been able to build the foundations of a truly meaningful and sector-specific response to the climate crisis. GCC would like to give our donors a special thank you for their continued support, without which the production of this resource would not have been possible.</p>	<p>● EDITED BY</p> <p>Bethany White</p>
<p>3 Waste strategy</p>			
<p>4 Addressing the obstacles</p>			
<p>5 FAQs</p>	<p>We believe that by aligning an international network of members with specific targets and focusing on effective action, together we can create an environmentally responsible visual arts sector.</p>		
<p>▢ Glossary</p>			
<p>CONTACT</p>	<p>Join our coalition of artists, institutions/non-profits, art sector businesses and galleries all of whom are committed to creating a sustainable sector. Membership is free and open to all.</p>		
<p>✉ Website</p>	<p>GCC is a registered charity and does not operate for profit.</p>		
<p>✉ LinkedIn</p>	<p><u>Become a member</u></p>		<p>● WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO</p> <p>Danny Chivers Dianne Dec Todd Hosflet Kim Kraczon Carolin Leistenschneider Nicole Yip</p>
<p>✉ Instagram</p>			
<p>✉ info@galleryclimatecoalition.org</p>	<p>This plan was developed by Gallery Climate Coalition and builds on GCC’s 2021 Decarbonisation Action Plan. GCC intends to publish revised versions of these Action Plans to ensure the information is up-to-date and relevant to our expanding membership. If you have comments about this resource or are interested</p>		

**// You can be more
ambitious than you think.
Renewable and sustainable
alternatives are rapidly
becoming more accessible.
It is vital to keep challenging
your own assumptions
about what is possible**

