

## Introduction to GCC's Strategic Climate Funds

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 and our reasons for this are outlined here.

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

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

As GCC membership is overwhelmingly in the Global North, we have a responsibility to not just 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, which 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. This is how it works:

- 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 a 'Strategic Climate Fund' (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.

It's crucial that any SCF spending on organisational reduction measures (1) is focused on creating change that would not otherwise have happened. See below for some suggestions and starting points for using your SCF this way.

For (2) and (3), GCC offers a shortlist of such initiatives that we have approved and established partnerships with.

**Important: This policy does not permit users to claim carbon neutrality or 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.**

---

## Financing Strategic Climate Funds

There are a few options for financing a Strategic Climate Fund. If we all commit to donating annually in line with any of these approaches, it would add up to a significant amount of funds going into world-changing projects.

Calculating how much to spend on SCFs will depend on what type of organisation you are. GCC recommends members pay into their SCF by either:

- Allocating a percentage of their annual revenue (recommended minimum 1-2%)
- Multiplying their annual CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions by a figure between £50 – £100 per tonne to find a fund total
- Or by fundraising specifically for their SCF at a level parallel to either of these calculations

Higher earning / higher polluting organisations should choose a figure towards the top ends of these ranges.

## Spending Strategic Climate Funds

Once you have money in your fund 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.

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.

Any scheme that does not fulfil these criteria will not be considered by GCC as a Strategic Climate donation. GCC is particularly interested in projects that support and empower marginalised peoples, especially those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

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 in order to get off the ground. This is where strategic investments in the arts sector via SCFs can help to make a difference:

- Subsidise lower-carbon purchasing options, where you might otherwise have bought the 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 rather than planes for medium-range journeys.
- Establishing a Circularity Network with other arts organisations in your region to collectively invest in and share reusable exhibition furniture and packaging materials.
- 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.
- Commissioning an energy audit of your premises by a trained professional.
- 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.

These recommendations are aimed at organisations that would not otherwise be able to afford these kinds of changes. We would expect most of our members (especially arts businesses, commercial galleries and large public museums) to be making these kinds of investments already, as part of their 2030 decarbonisation plans, and donating their SCFs to the most urgent external projects.

---

More information about [Strategic Climate Funds](#). More information about [GCC](#).