



ARCHITECTURE IS CLIMATE

CLIMATE ACTION POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

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1.0 Irish Architecture Foundation

With a focus on public audiences and established in 2005, the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) is Ireland's independent organisation that fosters and advances the culture and communication of architecture. Based in Dublin, but with a national remit and an international network, the IAF is principally funded by the Arts Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Office of Public Works, and Dublin City Council. Across an increasingly broad range of events, programmes, and exhibitions, the IAF partners with individuals, organisations, government agencies, education institutions and civil society groups to ensure that our work builds civic pride and action, and outcomes are impactful and transformative. The IAF has produced and delivered one of the largest cultural festivals, *Open House Dublin* since 2005, which brings architecture to an annual audience of over 40,000 people. The IAF has produced award winning exhibitions and events programmes such as *Housing Unlocked* and works nationally in architecture-led placemaking programmes such as *Home Town Architect*, *Bog Bothy* and more. In 2024, 2025 it is touring *The Reason of Towns*, an exhibition with *Valerie Mulvin*, Ireland's first ever touring exhibition dealing specifically with the subject of the past, present and future heritage of the Irish town.

2.0 Our organisational commitment to climate aware practices

The built environment is estimated to account for more than 36% of the overall annual greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland.¹ As a principal point of contact between the architectural profession and the general public - offering the public 949 opportunities to engage with architecture in 2024 - the IAF has a powerful opportunity to make a significant impact as an advocate for climate-sensitive and sustainable practices in the built environment.

Already, through climate-related programming, the IAF is a strong voice for sustainable and ecologically sensitive architecture practices. It is also - and will continue to be - a platform for the gathering of resources, knowledge and new ways of thinking in this

¹ Building in a Climate Emergency (BIACE) Research Lab, UCD School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy, for the Irish Green Building Council, [Report](#), 2022.

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area. At this moment however, there is and always is, significant opportunity for improvement.

This Climate Action Policy and associated action plan outline how the IAF will be developing practices that reduce its organisational impact on the environment, demonstrate best practice in doing so, and find new ways through programming to allow us to communicate the urgency of action required to mitigate climate change, and guide conversations that remain focussed, serious and hopeful.

3.0 Working Towards Principles

The IAF's climate action policy is underpinned by an ardent organisational belief that the cultural sector has a significant role to play in communicating the urgency of climate change to the wider public. We know that through thoughtful, pragmatic and charismatic programming, we can reach new audiences in new ways and be a voice for positive change.

4.0 Monitoring

We will continuously monitor our climate action plan through regular assessments, data tracking and stakeholder feedback. Key performance indicators will measure progress against our baseline and we will conduct periodic reviews to ensure alignment with our climate action goals. Transparent reporting and adaptive strategies will help us to refine our plan and to drive sustained improvement in our activities. We will periodically take stock of the impacts this climate action plan is having on our overall carbon impact. These moments of reflection will be followed by tweaks and improvements to our practices to ensure continuous learning and guard against complacency.



5.0 The Action Plan

This action plan has been divided into three overlapping phases.

Phase 1 - 2025

Taking Stock

The remainder of 2025 will see a period of internal auditing and reflection of our current practices. We will develop ways to track and measure our climate impact, and set out a series of achievable short, medium and long term targets and focus areas.

Phase 2 - 2026–2028

Implementation, Continuous Learning and Long term planning

Phase two, starting in January 2026, will see the implementation of short and medium term actions, alongside the rollout of impact tracking practices and laying the groundwork for meeting long term targets that involve making structural changes.

Phase 3 - 2028 onwards

Structural and Permanent Changes to our Practices

From 2028 onwards, all short and medium term actions will have been actioned, or will be in process, and the IAF should have made significant progress in structural, long term transformations in our practices.

We have divided our climate action plan into four key organisational impact areas:

1. Daily Operations
2. Festivals
3. Exhibitions
4. Programming

Programming, refers, in this context, to impacts that we believe we can leverage by strategically foregrounding climate change thematically throughout our annual programme.

5.1 Daily Operations

The IAF has a staff of 12 full-time employees - increasing to 16 during the annual Open House Festival - operating in an office and hybrid event space on Bachelor's Walk, Dublin 1. While a large amount of our work is off-site, working on festivals, exhibitions, workshops, events around the country, the bulk of our time is spent in an office context. The 'Daily Operations' impact area covers the actions we will take to reduce the impacts in this side of our everyday work.

5.1 Daily Operations Action Table

ACTION	GOAL	CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST/ BUDGET
Heating of IAF building	Reduce energy use	BMS system set up to kick in once outdoor temperature drops below a certain point. Heating is programmed to operate only during working hours, from 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm.	Adjust sensor points for temperature to ensure heating is used only when needed. Adjust heating operating times.	Phase 1	Building Management Team.	This should eventually result in savings.
Office printing/photo copying/paper use	Reduce usage of printed materials internally and ensure all materials (paper, ink cartridges etc) are correctly recycled		Raise awareness of recycling procedures and ask staff to consider the necessity of printing materials.	Phase 1	Building Management Team	This should incur savings.
Staff travel for work	Ensure IAF staff travel via low-carbon options (public	Staff encouraged to take public transport and	Enact a 'slow travel policy' that supports staff to choose	Phase 1 early behavioural change. Slow Travel Policy	Core Team	Public Transport tends to be cheaper than

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	transport, slow travel) while on IAF business, where options are available	assess necessity of travel	low carbon options when appropriate and feasible.	in Phase 3.		mileage. Slow travel will incur costs in staff time.
Remote Working procedure/ Online Meetings	Minimise carbon emissions while operating remote working and online meetings.	Staff work on a hybrid model		Phase 1	Core Team	This may result in savings in building costs.
ACTION	GOAL	CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST/ BUDGET
Guest travel	Ensure that guest travel minimises carbon emissions where possible	Variable based on guest availability and preference	Enquire with guests as to the possibility of low carbon travel arrangements and support low-carbon options where available, Develop a 'Slow Travel policy' that formalises and announces the above.	Phase 1, Slow Travel Policy enacted in Phase 3	Core Team, managers	
Add sustainability targets to bi-weekly team meetings as standing issue.	Maintain team awareness of status of sustainability targets and raise new actions and opportunities.	IAF team meetings do not include this as a standing issue.	Add sustainability actions to the standing agenda.	Phase 1	Whole team.	No cost
Inventory IAF furniture	Gain an awareness of the number of tables, chairs, cabinets etc owned by the IAF including specifications.	Our inventory of furniture is not fully up to date.	Check status of current inventory, improve if possible, replace if required.	Phase 1 then continuous	Building facilities team	This should incur savings in avoiding repeat purchases
Practice low impact digital practices	Reduce repeated downloads	An overreliance on google drive	Store large files (design versions,	Phase 1 and 2	Exhibition team.	NA

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	from cloud platforms	when working across computers has meant that we can often download files from the cloud multiple times. This incurs significantly more server energy than downloading a file once (onto a harddrive), and filing it logically.	renderings, photographs, film files, publication drafts) locally on hard drives, and store them in a way that is logical and easy to find.			
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5.2 Festivals

A festival of architecture can play a crucial role in highlighting climate action through showcasing sustainable and innovative design solutions and fostering conversations on environmental responsibility and climate policy. Through festival programming we can educate, inform and explore possibilities and opportunities to create a climate-resilient city. Open House Dublin serves as a collaborative platform for dialogue, ideas and awareness bringing together architects, policymakers and communities to address climate challenges and drive action towards a greener future. We will strive to highlight and encourage positive climate action through our programme strands and through our audience engagement strategies.

5.2.1 Festivals Action Table

ACTION	GOAL	CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST/ BUDGET
Festival Audience Travel	To highlight and encourage the use of travel with low carbon emissions to festival events	N/A	Include and encourage sustainable transport options on website event listings and booking correspondence	Phase 1 (2025 Open House Festival & Bog Bothy Festival)	Festivals Team	N/A

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Festival Participants & Contributors	To include information on sustainable travel options as part of event registration for Open House Dublin	N/A	Participants and contributors will be asked to submit information including ways to travel to their event/location by public transport, walking distance from city centre and availability of local bike racks.	Phase 1 (Open House Dublin 2025)	Festivals Team	N/A
Communication to Public & Partners	To clearly communicate and make visible both our commitment to climate action and the actions we are taking through the festival	N/A	1)Include clear information on the Open House and IAF websites, press releases, newsletters and social media highlighting the addition of sustainable travel options to the festival events programme listings. 2)Promote and highlight specific and relevant events/contributors which address the themes of climate action and sustainability	Phase 1 (Open House Dublin2025)	Festivals and Communications Teams	N/A
Festival Programme	To highlight and include relevant events or programme strands which discuss or exemplify strong climate action priorities and efforts to reduce carbon footprint in the city.	Some details currently highlighted through programme information dissemination on websites.	Improve the visibility of events/buildings which address climate action priorities and actively research and seek to include these projects in the festival programme.	Phase 1 (Open House Dublin 2025)	Festivals & Communications Teams	N/A

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5.3 Exhibitions

5.3 Exhibitions Action Table

ACTION	GOAL	CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST/ BUDGET
Replace wall vinyls and other single use exhibition materials with reusable alternatives.	Reducing single use exhibition materials	We regularly make use of vinyl wall and wall displays, cable ties are often used in organising power cables.	Replace cable ties with velcro binds. Seek alternatives to vinyl displays whenever possible by using projection. Whenever there is a repeating event, avoid 'dating' placards so they do not become obsolete.	Phase 1 and 2	Exhibition team, design and production	This should result in savings.
Improve online publicity practices to reduce requirements for printed publicity materials	Reducing printed publicity materials	Posters remain a valuable publicity device, for developing local, on street awareness. We use these in particular in rural contexts.	Make sure our online publicity and programme announcements are as legible and up to date as possible, so that we can publicise exhibitions effectively with minimal printed posters.	Phase 2	Communications team IAF	This should result in savings.
Printing in small batches and 'to-order' only.	Reduce excessive printing of exhibition paraphernalia.	Cost reductions in larger batch printing (of exhibition leaflets for example) often means that we finish an exhibition run with extra copies of exhibition companion guides.	Make allowances in the budget for smaller batch print runs. Absorb the extra cost elsewhere.	Phase 2	Exhibition and design teams, IAF programme managers	The reduction in waste copies may offset the increased prices in printing in smaller batches.
Give visitors alternatives to printed exhibition guides where appropriate.	As above	Many of our exhibitions are accompanied by printed exhibition guides. These are important, and play an aesthetic role that should	Make sure all leaflets are available online (downloadable via QR code) to give visitors the option to not take a physical	Phase 2	Exhibition production team.	Low cost

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		not be compromised. But there is no excuse for printing too many.	copy. Encourage visitors to return guides before leaving the gallery.			
Use biodegradable and low impact, sustainable materials wherever possible	Reduce use of high impact, non biodegradable materials.	We sometimes use plastic based vinyl displays, or single use carpeting to dress spaces.	Explore biodegradable alternatives to vinyl, and use rental drapes and carpets whenever possible.	Phase 1-2-3	Design and production teams.	Renting materials, curtains and carpets is usually more expensive than disposable alternatives. This needs to be budgeted for in production budgets.
Use digital or reusable design tools (ipads whiteboards) as sketching devices.	Reduce waste materials in R & D phases.	In R & D phases, we often use paper and sketchbooks to quickly draft exhibition designs.	Keep printing (of floorplans and sketches) to a minimum. Make full use of digital alternatives, presentations, renderings. Use organic and recycled paper (sketchbooks) at all times. Purchase an iPad for sketching.	Phase 1-3	Design team.	Investment in company iPad.

5.3 Programming

As a topic, the changing climate is already suffused thematically throughout the IAF’s annual programming. It is an unavoidable feature of the most urgent contemporary discussions around the built environment, and indeed, the IAF has never avoided it as an issue. Up to this point however, the climate and sustainability has been featured in an enthusiastic but somewhat ad hoc way in our programming. This section represents ways to formalise and track our coverage of the climate emergency in our programming across a normal year.

Programming actions

ACTION	GOAL	CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS	POSSIBLE ACTIONS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	COST/ BUDGET
Audience Surveys	To collect qualitative and quantitative data to establish both the attitudes of our audience to climate action mitigations and societal value and establish the methods of travel currently in use.	N/A	Include relevant questions in the post festival survey to establish current audience practices and attitudes.	Phase 1 (Open House Dublin 2025)	Festivals & Communications Teams	N/A
Develop eco travel guidance page on IAF website.	Present audience members with available sustainable travels options	We locate our activities near transport hubs where possible, and offer guidance, but it is ad hoc and delivered per event	Create a page on the website that directs audiences to resources to choose sustainable travel arrangements.	Phase 2	IAF communications team. Supported by programme managers.	Staffing research hours only, infrastructure in place.
Use and encourage car sharing and public transport during site visits and launches.	Avoid single occupancy car travel.	Occasionally, exhibition launches take place off site in locations without public transport. This often results in multiple cars travelling	Encourage and enable car sharing among collaborators and invitees. Use public transport wherever possible.	Phase 1	Whole IAF	For project collaborators this should reduce mileage and fuel costs.

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		separately.				
Building sustainability into commissioning practices, working with green partners	Develop a list of trusted suppliers who share our commitment to climate friendly exhibitions.	We work with a range of partners, most of who are already climate conscious, but this is by chance and inclination rather than by design.	Establish a check list of standards we want to see in our suppliers. Looking for environment pledges on websites, for example.	Phase 3	IAF programme managers	This may occasionally mean we use more expensive suppliers. Budget accordingly, adapt to the change in expected costs gradually